WASHINGTON COLLEGE REVIEW

A Liberal Arts Journal

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By Catherine Sheahan '01

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The *Washington College Review* is a liberal arts journal that seeks to recognize the best of undergraduate student writing and graphic art from all disciplines of the College and to publish work deserving of wider availability to readers in the college community and beyond. The *Washington College Review* is published annually by the O'Neill Literary House Press.

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FOREWORD

Since it's beginning in 1993, the *Washington College Review* has achieved as its goal to produce the best writing and graphic art of undergaduate students from all disciplines in the college. The works in this journal have been selected among numerous submissions from students of all backgrounds.

The articles selected for this years *Review* reflect the true meaning of what a liberal arts education means- to learn not only what is needed for one to get by in life, but to have a full and well rounded understanding of your surroundings. Included are contributions in Hispanic studies, computer science, biology, poetry and prose, archaeology, law, and the humanities.

On behalf of myself and the other members of the Editorial Board, I would like to thank all students who submitted ~~an~~ articles and those professors that helped them along. I would personally like to thank the editorial board for their dedication and hard work: Jeanette Sherbondy for the experience; and Jennifer Lubkin, Meredith Davies Hadaway, and Diane Landskroener for their assistance and patience.

Jillian L. Kroos '02

John Milton
Enlightened Servant or Defensive Radical?

DAVID L. ORVIS

Throughout his life John Milton struggled with consistently worsening eyesight and, by the winter of 1651, had completely lost all vision in both eyes. Although suffering total blindness is a life-changing experience for any person, it was especially hard for Milton because he relied on his eyes so much, spending the majority of his day reading and researching. When he was not engaged in his studies, he was constantly composing sonnets, pamphlets, and the initial portions of what he hoped would become his great epic. But, before he could finally focus on his epic, Milton was devastated with total blindness. However, he continued to work diligently on his epic and the first edition of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667, nearly sixteen years after losing his sight. This leads to an interesting question: How would *Paradise Lost* be different if Milton retained his sight? In this epic, Milton stresses the importance of seeing the celestial light. In fact, he contends that being able to see the celestial light is far superior to normal human vision. Would Milton have stressed this aspect of faith and spirituality if he had not gone blind? If the answer is no, then why does he use this as his focus? Could *Paradise Lost* be Milton's defense against his critics, who claim his blindness is a punishment from God? Through analyzing his early poems, prose, and major works, the reader can begin to see why Milton claims superior sight to be one of God's greatest gifts to man.

Before the reader can understand how Milton incorporates his blindness into his writing, it is important to first look at how his contempo-

raries view his impairment and its causes. It appears those who are closest to Milton believe him in his view that his loss of sight is the result of his faithful service to God. However, many of those who oppose Milton use his sightlessness as an opportunity to destroy his credibility. One group who criticize Milton a great deal are his religious opponents, who "constantly [repeat] the accusation that his blindness [comes] upon him as a just punishment from God."[1] Essentially, these critics argue Milton does not lose his vision while doing God's work, as Milton believes, but rather as a punishment for writing heresy. Milton also has a number of political opponents who use the same logic to disparage him. One opponent, John Garfield, proclaims he is "the blind beetle that durst affront the Royal Eagle . . . I shall leave him under the rod of correction, wherewith God hath evidenced His particular judgment by striking him blind."[2] Supporters of the monarchy contend God has made Milton blind as punishment for rebelling against the hierarchy and the king. This is an effective argument because people believe the king can speak directly to God and therefore know why He would retaliate by taking Milton's eyesight.

Eventually, these criticisms begin to impact the opinions of Milton's associates. An example of this is Anne Sadier, sister of Cyriak Skinner's mother, who, when asked to read *Eikonoclastes*, replies, "You should have taken notice to God's judgment upon him, who struck him with blindness, and, as I have heard, he was fain to have the help of Andrew Marvell or else he could not have finished that most accursed libel."[3] As critics join the crusade to use Milton's apparent disability against him, more people begin to see his opponents' arguments as valid. One reason for this is that he holds radical religious and political views. It is much easier for people to associate with the more widely accepted Protestant beliefs than Milton's controversial ideas. Additionally, Milton is a

single man opposed by a massive group, and people are more likely to conform to a group than a single person. Essentially, it is this growing negative attitude that causes Milton to experience the four major emotional stages connected with his blindness.

The first emotional stage Milton experiences is a combination of shock and depression. There are two major factors that spark these emotions: disbelief and negative criticism. Although he knows his vision is worsening every day, he cannot fathom experiencing complete darkness for the duration of his life. He feels because he can no longer see, he will not be able to finish his great epic and, as a result, cannot serve God. He believes "through his blindness he [is] useless for his life's work."[4] In addition, Milton is deeply affected by his critics' negative remarks. He knows he will face much criticism for defending Puritanism and opposing the monarchy, but he does not anticipate his blindness being used against him in such a vicious manner. When he realizes his critics are beginning to affect the opinions of some of his associates, Milton can only feel shock and a degree of depression.

Milton expresses these feelings of shock and depression very well in several of his personal sonnets. An excellent example of this is "When I Consider... (1652)," in which he reflects on his life's achievements and how his blindness will affect any future accomplishments. Milton reveals his talent in writing is a blessing, stating, "When I consider how my light is spent."[5] Milton makes a direct comparison between his writing ability and his "light," claiming it is a gift coming directly from God. Furthermore, he realizes responsibility accompanies this gift, which is to use this light to serve his Creator. However, Milton feels it has been taken away from him, stating, "Talent which is death to hide" is "Lodg'd with me useless."[6] Milton believes he can no longer serve God because his blindness has cast a shadow over his light; his gift is

now useless. As the poem progresses, Milton questions God's justification for robbing him of his talent, writing, "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied."[7] Milton cannot understand why God would take away a talent he is using to serve Him. Because his Creator does not answer his pleas for an explanation, he becomes confused and depressed. His cherished gift has been taken from him by a God whom he has spent his life serving.

Another sonnet in which Milton expresses emotions of shock and depression is "Methought I saw... (1658)." In this sonnet, he reflects on how his blindness has affected his personal relationships. He begins in a dream-like sequence, stating, "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint / Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave."[8] He longs to see both his first wife, who is deceased, and his current wife, who is living but whom he cannot physically see. This melancholic tone dominates "Methought I saw..." and shows how depressed Milton has become while living his life in the dark. These feelings become most prominent in the closing lines of the sonnet, where he exclaims, "But O, as to embrace me she inclin'd, / I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night."[9] While many people think of nighttime as their darkness, Milton views it as his light because it is during this time his vision is restored through dreams: this is the only way he can see his loved ones. Every morning when he wakes, he relives the pain of having sight taken from his eyes. This forces Milton to recognize he will only regain his eyesight through death and ascension to Heaven. He writes, "I trust to have / Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint."[10] Through death, Milton's sight will be permanently restored and he will no longer rely on memories and dreams to see his loved ones.

However, Milton learns to live without his eyesight and eventually finds justification for God making him blind. He feels that "far from

being a disgrace, his blindness mark[s] him as a creature set apart for God's peculiar uses."[11] He believes it is not his talent in writing that is his gift, but rather his writing ability combined with blindness that is the true blessing. By taking his sight from him, God pulls Milton away from the distractions of everyday life and allows him to concentrate on his inner light: the celestial light. Although he can no longer see, Milton does not stop reading or writing for very long. He hires men to read passages from the Hebrew Bible to him in the morning and whenever he needs to do research. When he is ready to write, Milton has an amanuensis copy everything he dictates. As he becomes progressively more comfortable with his blindness, Milton also begins to defend himself against the accusations of his critics.

This desire for Milton to defend himself against his political and religious opponents becomes his second emotional stage in dealing with his blindness. Milton demonstrates this defensive nature very well in "The Second Defense of the People of England (1651)." One example of this is his reference to the hobby of sword fighting, which he practiced in his youth. He claims he became very good at this activity and it helped develop his strength and athletic ability. He expresses the belief that he has "the same courage, the same strength, though not the same eyes."[12] As he begins to embrace his blindness, Milton recognizes that although losing his vision has changed him, it has made him a better person. In addition, it has given him a new motivation to complete his epic. After describing his newly acquired strength, Milton begins to defend himself against critics who label his blindness a punishment. He replies, "Since my enemies boast that this affliction is only a retribution for the transgressions of my pen, I again invoke the Almighty to witness, that I never, at any time, write anything which I did not think agreeable to truth, to justice, and to piety."[13] This passage

shows significant growth in Milton's confidence because he challenges the credibility of the King, who is believed to be in direct contact with God. By using God as his witness, Milton challenges the King's relationship with God. In fact, he may be insinuating that he is closer to God than the king himself. The reader can see Milton's most powerful argument in "The Second Defense of the People of England" when he claims his blindness has made him stronger than the average man:

> There is, as the apostle has remarked, a way to strength through weakness. Let me then be the most feeble creature alive, as long as that feebleness serves to invigorate the energies of my rational and immortal spirit; as long as in that obscurity in which I am enveloped, the light of the divine presence more clearly shines, then, in proportion as I am weak, I shall be invincibly strong; and in proportion as I am blind, I shall more clearly see. O! that I may thus be perfected by feebleness, and irradiated by obscurity![14]

One reason for this drastic change in attitude is that after living without vision for an extended period of time, Milton has become comfortable with the darkness. He has had an opportunity to adjust to his new lifestyle and can now consider God's reasons for taking his sight. Another reason for his change in attitude is that although he cannot see or write on his own, many people continue to request his services. Friends and acquaintances insist that he continue writing his tracts. Realizing people are still supporting him, Milton regains the confidence he initially loses with his eyesight and returns to writing his masterpiece.

As his confidence grows Milton completes *Paradise Lost* (1667), a work for which he feels he has spent his whole life preparing and re-

searching. Throughout this epic the reader can see Milton's third emotional stage, which Majorie Hope Nicolson calls the "true warfaring Christian."[15] At this point in Milton's life, he has regained enough confidence to move past merely defending his blindness and begin using it to his benefit. In fact, from this new attitude stems the belief that he is justified in writing about the fall of man. As these feelings further develop, Milton finds it appropriate to include himself as the speaker of *Paradise Lost*, finding in his blindness "a new and more potent symbol of poetic inspiration."[16] The completion of his great epic is no longer a desire for Milton, but rather a necessity. He must reveal the circumstances surrounding the fall of Adam and Eve so man can learn from this event and construct a better sense of his place in God's world.

Milton's "warfaring Christian" attitude serves as the dominant voice of *Paradise Lost*. One example of this is the prologue of Book III, commonly referred to as the "Prologue of Light," in which Milton makes a specific reference to his blindness, explaining images "Revisit't not these eyes, that roll in vain / To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn."[17] Milton does not mention his blindness to gain sympathy from the reader, but rather as a way to include himself in the metaphor he creates between God and light. Furthermore, he includes himself to reestablish it is his light creating *Paradise Lost*. As the prologue continues, Milton compares himself to great blind writers of the past, writing,

> Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides,
> And Tiresias and Phineus Prophets old.[18]

Milton makes reference to these particular figures for a reason. For example, the reference to Thamyrus alludes to Homer's "On Music," in

which Thamyris is commissioned by Plutarch to write a poem about the war between the Titans and the gods.[19] One reason Milton references this character is because like Thamyris, he is also writing about an important war: the war in Heaven. In addition, Thamyris also wrote his great work while blind. Essentially, Milton is informing the reader that *Paradise Lost* will be as magnificent and revered as Thamyris's work. He also believes *Paradise Lost* is the Christian parallel to Thamyris's pagan war. As he concludes the "Prologue of Light," he tells the reader why he is justified in writing about God and the fall of man, explaining,

> So much the rather thou celestial light
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight.[20]

Milton believes that although he cannot see the sun's visible light as most other people, he can see a celestial light, which most people cannot see. Milton feels this is the superior light and uses *Paradise Lost* as a way to describe this light to those who are unable to see it. Additionally, it is important to note Milton's invocation moves from pagan to Christian, which is his way of showing the reader everything he writes in this epic is not simply what he thinks, but rather inspiration from the light he has been given.

However, the "Prologue of Light" is not the only place in *Paradise Lost* where Milton displays his "warfaring Chrisitian" attitude. He makes another strong reference to celestial light in the prologue of Book VII, explaining he receives his inspiration from the muse "While thou / Visit'st my slumbers Nightly."[21] Milton reminds the reader he receives his inspiration at night while he dreams, which is a metaphor he first

uses in his sonnets. The use of this metaphor shows how he has created strength out of what he once saw as a weakness. However, in *Paradise Lost* he sees this inspiration as superior to others' because it comes from an internal, spiritual light. This attitude continues in the prologue of Book IX, where Milton makes another comparison of blindness to night, stating,

> If answerable style I can obtain
> Of my celestial Patroness, who deigns
> Her nightly visitation unimplor'd
> And dictates to me slumb'ring.[22]

Milton feels it is essential to reiterate this comparison before he describes the fall of Adam and Eve, the central focus of *Paradise Lost*. He reminds the reader this account does not come from the imagination of a fallen man, but rather it is inspiration he receives from God through the gift of his blindness. In Book XII, Milton makes another important correlation between celestial light and his eyesight, writing, "I find / Mine eyes true op'ning, and my heart much eas'd."[23] Milton has spent thousands of lines interpolating his blindness with an internal light, yet in this passage his eyes appear to have been opened. However, Milton has acquired superior, more powerful vision with which he can see light many people are unable to see: the light of God.

After Milton finishes his great epic his attitude toward his blindness changes. He becomes less concerned with explaining the fall of man and justifying his superior vision because people can read about these revelations in *Paradise Lost*. This marks his fourth and final stage in dealing with his blindness: satisfaction and accomplishment. Although for a period of time he felt he would never finish it, Milton believes he has served his Creator well in completing *Paradise Lost*. Wil-

liam Riley Parker comments on this attitude, stating, "Milton may well have thought his poetic 'light' was 'spent.'"[24] Milton makes a clear distinction between his gift being "spent" as opposed to being "distinguished." He believes it has not been lost through punishment or misuse, but spent through many years of research, contemplation, and reflection. Furthermore, he has used it to serve God and better humanity.

Milton expresses this satisfaction in *Samson Agonistes* (1671). In the opening passage of this play, Milton uses the central character, Samson, to be his voice in expressing how he initially felt about his blindness, stating, "A little onward lend thy guiding hand / To these dark steps, a little further on; / For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade."[25] In this scene, Samson is led through a prison in Gaza, which is symbolic of the imprisonment of his blindness. Milton also felt this way when he started to deal with his own blindness. At first, he felt he could not serve God or live a full life without his sight.However, unlike Samson, Milton was able to see his blindness as a gift and use it to complete his epic. Here Milton is emphasizing his satisfaction by showing how other people either misuse or completely ignore their talents. As *Samson Agonistes* progresses, Milton includes contemplations and reflections about his life's accomplishments, writing,

> How many evils have enclos'd me round;
> Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
> Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
> How could I once look up, or heave the head,
> Who like a foolish Pilot have shipwreck't
> My vessel trusted to me from above.[26]

After contemplating the effect of blindness on his life's work, Milton ultimately feels losing his sight has given him strength he may not have

had with sight. In addition, he is satisfied with how he used that blindness to better man as best he could. Although his light may have been "spent," he feels it has not gone to waste. Milton also uses *Samson Agonistes* to make an interesting comparison between death and satisfaction, stating, "With peace and consolation hath dismissed, / And calm of mind, all passion spent."[27] Milton expresses a calmness he feels as a result of spending the majority of his time and energy writing *Paradise Lost*. He correlates this to death because he feels he has fulfilled his obligations on Earth and is now ready to join God and his loved ones in Heaven. He has succeeded in his attempt to "justify the ways of God to man."[28]

Milton's blindness has affected his writing a great deal, which the reader can see through his constant use of references to light and dark, day and night, and life and death. However, there is another way to view Milton's sightlessness. Because his work is so influenced by his blindness, it may be possible that his great epic could not have been written as well if he did not lose his vision. In fact, he may not have been able to write it at all. Could Milton have written about the celestial light if he had not gone blind? Would he have even recognized a celestial light if he had not gone blind? In essence, the central question regarding Milton's blindness is: Does Milton's blindness prepare him to accept inspiration from God, or does it create inspiration from God? If the reader chooses to accept the former, then Milton has succeeded in what he has hoped to accomplish on Earth. By accepting the gift of blindness and, in turn, a higher form of sight, Milton has completed his great epic and has served God. However, if the reader chooses to accept the latter, then Milton's reasons for writing his early poems, prose, and major works may be somewhat unclear. Although the central purpose of these works would remain the same, the symbols Milton uses may have additional, underlying motives. For example, Milton often

claims he has superior eyesight through blindness, and, in turn, he is able to see an internal light because the inferior light of the sun does not distract him. However, is Milton saying that if he had not lost his sight, he would not have been as able to receive inspiration from God? This is possible; however, it appears Milton is making a more general conclusion about the nature of his blindness. Through writing his early poems, prose, and major works, Milton is showing that man needs to focus on his weaknesses and see how these weaknesses can better him as a person, both physically and spiritually. By incorporating blindness in many of his works, he is showing the reader how he has utilized his own weakness to better humanity. The readers must now look within themselves to find their greatest weaknesses and transform them into their most powerful gifts.

END NOTES

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3. Parker, 964.
4. E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton* (New York: Collier Books, 1966), 331.
5. John Milton, "When I Consider…," in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Hughes (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1957).
6. Ibid., 3-4.
7. Ibid., 7.

8. John Milton, "Methought I Saw...," in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Hughes (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1957), 1-2.
9. Ibid., 13-14.
10. Ibid., 7-8.
11. James Holly Hanford and James G. Taaffe, *A Milton Handbook* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970), 91.
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15. Majorie Hope Nicolson, *A Reader's Guide to John Milton* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 155.
16. Parker, 800.
17. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Hughes (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1957), III.23-24.
18. Ibid., III.32-36.
19. Merritt Hughes, *Complete Poems and Major Prose* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1957), 258.
20. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III.51-55.
21. Ibid., VII.28-29.
22. Ibid., IX.20-23.
23. Ibid., XII.273-274.
24. Parker, 1043.

25. John Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Hughes (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1957), 1-3.
26. Ibid., 194-199.
27. Ibid., 1757-1758.
28. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I.26.

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The Moon at Harvest

was waning Orange
(calling
Halloween
skyward)
and as I tipped back
my head and stretched
arms up, I squeezed
a bit of pumpkin
from its imperfect circle.

CARYN LAZZURI

Hurricane Season

In Delft I bought porcelain elephants
not even an inch high. I named
each figurine alphabetically
like they were storms, destructive.

It wasn't October or even close
to Hurricane season then
but Delft was a natural disaster
that cowered inside.

Antoine, Bart, Camille—frozen and marching
head to tail towards the eye of uncalm.

CARYN LAZZURI

Awkward Days

CHRIS KLIMAS

 hese are the dreams of the dead. This is what paddles through ivory streams when strange luck restores consciousness to a half-decaying knuckle or a corner of an ear, when for one time only, a body lying in the ground can remember the surface of its life. It cannot see the packed dirt around it; it cannot hear the faint tread of people above it.

It can only remember one of the days it spent alive. Never its happiest or saddest day; it isn't the day that its sister taught it how to tie its shoes, or the day it discovered oranges, or the day it decided that it didn't like roller coasters anymore. It is only the days that passed like icebergs in the midnight Arctic that remember themselves.

So she is caught in a traffic jam on the way home from the third day at her new job. The paperwork that she thinks she'll find so overwhelming tonight sits on the passenger seat of the Ford Taurus, loose edges slipping into the crevices of the upholstery, with page numbers and obscure nomenclature peeking out from the edges. It still smells like a new car though it's been a month since her parents bought it for her— they called it her new beginning, and they smiled as they signed the lease. And the afternoon light is so fixating, so tender and yellow, that it's hard for her to concentrate on the license plate of the car in front of her.

She takes off her sunglasses and rests them on the dashboard. Unintentionally she notices that the curve of the lenses resembles a smile just like the one she's wearing inside herself. It's the thrill of new productivity, of— a new beginning. She's only twenty-seven but the heels and the business skirt (gray, just like the car, just like the office build-

ing, just like the computer on the desk, just like the color of her eyes) make her feel thirty-two.

The line keeps inching forward slowly, the needle of her speedometer tickling itself upwards. She has already exhausted her conjectures about accidents, construction, congestion, or rubbernecking, so instead she observes the signs on the pickup trucks and the bumper stickers of the minivans. Everybody has their own message except for her.

She's never shopped for a bumper sticker or something to hang from her rear view. Before it seemed tacky; now she just doesn't have enough time. She says she's busy and everyone understands how lunch just isn't possible today or the movie just won't work out (maybe tomorrow, or maybe next week). But secretly she spends so much time in her bedroom just staring into the texture of the pillow, her eyes growing wet with a memory that won't quite remove itself from her life. She doesn't have problems and she never did. Just— things that didn't happen the way they should have.

Now the highway rises up on great cement pillars and she is drawn towards the sky, and she lifts the sunglasses up and presses surely on the pedal, and though the sun is turning her chin fiery and soft and collapsing her pupils into defiant dots, she doesn't feel free. But there's time for that once she gets home. Third days at anything are difficult.

So he's lying on the couch and his girlfriend's just broken up with him, right before he could reach the safety of an afternoon school bus nap, and his family keeps coming through the living room and asking him how he's feeling, and he'd really feel a lot better if they would stop asking. He says he's fine— it's what you're supposed to say and he's too lazy to disagree with himself. The afternoon cartoons keep coming on the television, the rooster and the superman and the distorted women

with four fingers on each hand. They accumulate in his stomach in a mush of broken nightmares.

This isn't the first time he's been dumped and it probably won't be the last; that at least would be something. But this time is only part of the long chain that constitutes his life. Maybe next time he won't feel so bad, or maybe next time it'll be his idea to break up. Maybe next time it'll happen for the right reasons. It doesn't matter. It's only history.

He lowers his eyes from the television. The beginnings of tears have turned his vision muddly warbled. Seeing the crying start makes it worse, so that the tears increase themselves like bacteria dividing, and he buries his head inside himself and breathes sick, fluttering breaths into the fabric of his shirt.

After long moments in the darkness of his body, something explodes onscreen, and he raises his eyes to watch flecks of steel and ash descend through the sky onto the head of a blackened coyote whose eyes might resemble his own.

It's a perfect seventy degrees inside the house. It's an almost-warm day outside but his father refused to open the windows, even though he wore a sweater to breakfast and tugged at it uneasily as he ate his cream of wheat, even though his sister asked so politely as she went out the door. It's his father's decision. And he thinks that his father hates himself sometimes.

Maybe that's why he feels like this right now. Maybe it's only genealogy. He wishes that he could stand up and walk three hundred miles from his house and scream something, just to be able to say something definite, and then on the way back, go to her house and tell her all of the things he hadn't because he was worried that she'd be upset at him.

And then he'd spit on her sidewalk and slam the front door in her face, the same way he had in his dream three days ago.

He folds the thought in his mind like a pastry crust, adding detail onto detail until he can almost see the way her eyes would crinkle in loathing and love and fear when he tells her the whole story: everything that he saw happening and everything that he wished had happened. It would be a long story, but it'd be worth the telling.

So she pauses as she lifts the fork to her mouth, the reheated pasta clinging submissively to the tines, because there's something in the sky that she can see just barely. The sun's already set and there are planes going places but there's something else that she can discern through the kitchen window.

She watches it until it's gone, and then she eats the rest of her food from the Tupperware container, even scooping some of the sauce from the corner with the base of her fork, and then she really doesn't know what to do. She walks to the living room with the pretense that she's going somewhere else, but by the time she's reached it, she still doesn't know what to do with the next ten minutes of her life. So she walks in slow circles around the living room, looking at the shadows cast by the floor lamp, watching her feet move up and down. She could call it dancing by herself but she's not dancing.

Then slowly through the window she sees it again in the sky, and she stands fascinated on one leg. She watches it happen until she feels something start to build up in her, an unpleasant pang of emotion, the music box of memory springing open again- so she turns away from the window and places her leg back down on the ground, just like how normal people do it.

The paperwork lies on the rocking chair, just watching her. So she throws it away.

So he's feeling better now, or at least more neutral than before. It only takes a little time to forget circumstance. The news has come on and in some ways it's reassuring to hear about fires and anonymous murders in the city, just to know that today is just like every other day. His mother is buzzing in the kitchen with spatulas and marinating brushes but no smell emerges from the doorway, his sister is talking on the phone about something that won't matter in a month, and he doesn't know where his father is.

Everything else in the house is right, so he has to fix himself or at least stop acting so broken. He's done with crying for the day, but he still lies on the couch and his arm muscles stay slackened.

So she's decided that she won't go back to work anymore. The skirt fit so right around her hips; the pencils felt so calming in her grip. But it's only a job, and it's only a job she's afraid of now that it's dark. Her parents wouldn't understand the reasons she feels inside her and maybe they're not good reasons but they're the only ones she has.

She can't be anyone but herself. She told them that a long time ago, but she couldn't explain it hard enough that they would believe her. She's only herself. Maybe if she gives the car back, they won't be angry. Maybe if she moves away again, they won't try to find her.

Maybe her life isn't going to be as bad as she thinks it will be.

So he's sitting at dinner and the knife slides out of his hand onto his glass plate. The noise startles him and as his sister turns to ask him another question, he looks up to the ceiling as if there will be something there for him to see, to know, to escape into.

He rolls his bottom lip under his teeth but the feelings won't go away. His father stares at him so fixedly and the expression on his own face as the tear comes down (by accident, Dad, by accident) must be incomprehensible to his father.

So she lies in bed and wishes she could see it again in the sky, to see it again, to smile, and to see it again. But it doesn't come.

So he asks to be excused from the table, to place the silverware in the dishwasher and to rinse the plate in the sink and throw his napkin into the trash. But his father opens his mouth in the arch of an O--

It'll pass, she murmurs. It'll all pass away.

It's only a day, he thinks. It's only one day.

Invocando la imagen de la mujer
Tres poemas de Raúl Aceves y una introducción

BENJAMIN CLAUSEN

During the summer of 2000 I spent five weeks in Guadalajara, Mexico, attending classes at the University of Guadalajara and researching contemporary Mexican poetry with a grant from the Society of Junior Fellows. My literature professor at the university put me in touch with three poets who live and work in Guadalajara: Raúl Aceves, Raúl Bañuelos and Luis Medina Gutiérrez. All three work at La Casa de la Palabra y las Imágines, an art studio and research center owned by the University of Guadalajara.

The three poets' work combines a simple, aesthetic scrutiny of day-today life with powerful metaphoric and symbolic resonance. Their influences range from Pablo Neruda to Octavio Paz. Like many earlier movements in the history of Mexican poetry, such as the Modernists and avant-garde schools, there is an international and universal aspect to their work; Aceves, Bañuelos and Medina Gutiérrez are all well read in English and American poetry and can cite many influences from these distinct national traditions.

The poetry of Raúl Aceves, the focus of this article, is an accessible but philosophical poetry. Many of Aceves's poems are love poems, but they always transcend this context, their meanings bleeding into other facets of human experience. I have included three poems by Raúl Aceves in this article, along with my English translation. In each of these poems Aceves approaches "the woman," both as an erotic force and as a metaphysical entity.

In the first poem, "I Knew a Woman Made of Chocolate," the woman described is transformed into images of the natural world by the poet's sexual imagination. In the second poem, "To Comprehend the Power of Woman," the female is conceived as an immortal force, half of a polarity which, when combined with the male, encompasses the beautiful erotic imagery with powerful metaphos in which the woman assumes various roles and symbols such as "lips," "God," and "man."

Conocí al poeta Raúl Aceves durante el verano de 2000 cuando estaba estudiando en el Centro de Estudios Para Extranjeros (CEPE) en la Universidad de Guadalajara e investigando la poesía contemporánea mexicana con una donación de la sociedad de Junior Fellows. Mi profesor de literatura en el CEPE me dio los nombres de tres poetas: Raúl Aceves, Raúl Bañuelos y Luis Medina Gutiérrez, y me puso en contacto con ellos para que yo pueda perseguir mi investigación. Estos tres poetas junto con sus otras muchas responsabilidades, trabajan en la Casa de la Palabra y las Imágenes[1] y allí es donde me reunía con ellos para llevar a cabo unas entrevistas sobre la poesía mexicana. Los tres se sitúan entre los más importantes poetas contemporáneas en Guadalajara: Aceves y Bañuelos son autores establecidos y su obra era parte del plan de estudios del concurso de la Literatura mexicana contemporánea en el CEPE; y aun cuando Gutiérrez es más joven y ha publicado menos libros, también tiene un gran reconocimiento en el mundo de la poesía mexicana y ha ganado muchos premios y concursos de publicación.

Durante el verano de 2000 me familiaricé con la obra de estos tres poetas. Desafortunadamente, es difícil encontrar libros en México a menos que sean escritos por los autores más renombrados, y por eso solamente obtuve un libro de cada poeta, la colección de poemas con que cada poeta está más satisfecho. Aunque sea limitada, voy a presentar

mi crítica sobre la obra de estos tres poetas, la que he espigado de los libros al que tengo acceso.

La mayor parte de la poesía de Aceves, Bañuelos y Gutiérrez surge de la vida cotidiana, un aspecto llamado de la poesía de los años después del movimiento posrevolucionario[2]. Aceves y Bañuelos también se interesan por conceptos abstractos, filosóficos y metafísicos, incorporando la tradición de los "Contemporáneos"[3] y miembros de la Generación de 1954[4] como Octavio Paz, mientras la obra de Gutiérrez se fija en la vida cotidiana para realizar resonancias alegóricas muy fuertes, a veces invocando la mitología indígena o imágenes y personajes que parecen mitológicos. La poesía de los tres no tiene ningún propósito social ni político; no es parte de la tradicion revolucionaria sino la de los "Contemporáneos" cuyos únicos propósitos eran la creación de una obra de arte, la perfección estética, y la búsqueda de lo universal.

Aceves, Bañuelos y Gutiérrez también tienen un aspecto internacional como los modernistas[5], los vanguardistas[6] y los poetas posrevolucionarias en México. Todos los tres son muy familiares con la poesía inglesa y norteamericana y, además, Aceves ha trabajado con un amigo en la traducción de la poesía coreana. Esta influencia de la poesía de otros paises se puede ver en la obra de ellos. Aunque Aceves y Bañuelos nacieron en los años cincuenta y pueden ser incluídos en la llamada "Generación de los años ochenta"[7] o "la poesía de crisis,"[8] no se refleja esto en su poesía, una poesía que no busca su identidad en la rebelión contra el gran contenido intelectual de Octavio Paz y otros poetas posrevolucionarios sino en una apropiación de esta tradición. Gutiérrez se puede situar como una voz fuerte y diestra entre la profusión de la poesía actual en México.

Aun cuando la obra poética de Aceves, Bañuelos y Gutiérrez son muy distintas y tienen sus propias idiosincrasias, también hay evidencia de que son parte de una comunidad literaria. Por la razón de que hay

pocos lectores de la poesía actual en México, los poetas publicados que existen leen y critican su poesía entre sí. Como dice Gutiérrez en su entrevista, "somos lectores de nosotros mismos" y esto crea cierto sentido de familia. Por ejemplo, la descripción y crítica de la poesía de Gutiérrez que aparece en la portada de su primer libro fue escrito por Bañuelos. Así también Bañuelos dedica una de sus poemas a Aceves. Está claro que nuestros tres poetas son amigos y colegas que funcionan dentro de una comunidad poética mexicana.

Ahora enfocamos más específicamente el caso de Aceves. Raúl Aceves nació en 1951 en Guadalajara, Jalisco, México. Estudió la licenciatura en psicología en la Universidad jesuíta del Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente. Desde 1988 labora como profesor-investigador en el Departamento de Estudios Literarios de la Universidad de Guadalajara. Escribe poesía, aforismos, ensayos y minificciones, principalmente. Entre sus libros de poesía se encuentran los siguientes: *Cielo de las cosas devueltas* (1982), *Expedición al Ser* (1989), *Las arpas del relámpago* (1990), *La torre del jardín de los símbolos* (1990), *Lotería de milagro* (1996), *Dislocaciones y travesías* (1997), *Caja de islas* (1999), y *Oficios mexicanos* (2000). Los tres poemas que he incluido aquí vienen de *Las arpas del relámpago* excepto "Para Comprender El Poder De La Mujer."

La poesía de Aceves es una poesía sencilla pero profunda. Se ha dicho que él escribe como un niño, con un gran asombro inocente ante la vida y el mundo. Sin embargo, su obra maneja con gran destreza conceptos filosóficos. Como decía él, "La intensidad es no sólo en cuanto al sentimiento que expresa sino también intelectual, de ideas." A Aceves le encanta jugar, con ideas, con palabras y con la forma del poema mismo, pero sus juegos nunca oscurecen el momento poético que es la fuerza fundamental de sus versos. Por ejemplo, su poema

"Torre de Pisa" tiene una forma caligramática en que se refleja el tema del poema: la imágen de la escalera y el deseo primordial del ser humano de subir a sí mismo. En este sentido Aceves es un poeta experimental pero sus innovaciones siempre sirven su próposito poético.

Raúl Aceves es un poeta del amor humano, con todas las resonancias que éste tiene en nuestra experiencia. Según él, hay una "necesidad de expresarse el sentimiento más profundo que tenemos en el amor" y "el lenguaje de la poesía es muy apto para eso." Relacionada con el amor es el tema de la mujer que aparece mucho en su poesía, no sólo como objeto del amor del hombre sino también como fuerza erótica, símbolo metafísico, y sobre todo un elemento fiero e independiente en que se encuentra una ambigüedad muy rica y enigmática.

A la edad de diecisiete años Aceves fue parte de una expedición a subir la montaña Iztlazihuatl. Durante la expedición ocurrió un accidente horrible en que murieron once de sus compañeros. Este accidente ha tenido un impacto muy fuerte sobre Aceves y su poesía en que aparece muchas veces la imágen de la montaña, como madre cuidadora y como escalera a la muerte. No obstante esta experiencia tan seria, Aceves mantiene en su poesía una inocencia y un humor muy vivos. Su trabajo como investigador de la literatura de los indígenas y su interés y exploración personal de las filosofías y religiones orientales también han influido en su obra. Como Bañuelos y Gutiérrez, Aceves ha abandonado la rima y el número determinado de sílabas en un verso, pero todavía trata con mucho cuidado la orquestración de sus palabras y la estructura orgánica y única de cada poema.

En el poema "Conocí una mujer de chocolate," alcanza Aceves unas imágenes muy vívidas y sensuales. Se describe a una mujer exótica que es transformada por las metáforas en aspectos de la naturaleza, como el chocolate, los árboles y las abejas. Es la imaginación sexual y

erótica del poeta que transfigura a la mujer y que dicta que su belleza se traslade a las cosas del mundo natural. Al fin, el poeta también es transformado, por la fuerza erótica de la mujer tanto como por su propia imaginación. Él se vuelve el viento del símil de la última estrofa, el cual es abrazado por las palmeras al mismo tiempo que los "tumba para contemplarles las raíces." Las raíces, en este caso, llevan no sólo su definición literal sino que también refieren a la alcurnia de esta mujer, la cual puede tener una raíz indígena.

El poema "Para comprender el poder de la mujer" aborda el tema de la mujer también pero mediante otra estrategia. Todas las siete estrofas comienzan con el mandato "Imagine." Esta estructura era común en Latinoamérica en otra época en que se usaba como una manera de hacer un discurso al lector sobre un tema, utilizando la imaginación. La repetición de "Imagine" añade fuerza al poema y funciona como invitación íntima a participar en el poema porque habla directamenta al lector.

Contrapuesta al poema "Conocí una mujer de chocolate," la mujer de "Para comprender el poder de la mujer" no es una persona específica quien se convierte en la naturaleza sino que funciona como generalización abstracta de lo femenino. Por las imágenes poéticas y la alegoría del poema, "la mujer" se convierte en un símbolo metafísico, la mitad de una polaridad, un concepto filosófico que se relaciona con el Yin-Yang del Taoismo. En las últimas tres estrofas el lector y el poeta, como hombres, encuentran su otra polaridad y los dos, lo masculino y lo femenino, se unen para formar el Universo.

El poema "Mujer usa labios" es parte de un ciclo poético dentro de la colección *Las arpas del relámpago* en el cual todos los poemas comienzan con las palabras "mujer usa." Otra vez Aceves está abordando el tema de la mujer quien en este caso puede ser una mujer específica

como en "Conocí una mujer de chocolate," o una abstracción de lo femenino como en "Para comprender el poder de la mujer." En la primera estrofa la mujer aparece por unas imágenes muy sensuales de su boca que es su instrumento para decir palabras o dejar silencio, y al mismo tiempo se relaciona con las imágenes de la vagina y la flor. Estas imágenes son unidas por la repetición de "flor" y "gajos" que crea una transición sutil entre los versos. Hay una ambigüedad muy rica en los términos "ser hombre" y "ser Dios," que pueden referirse literalmente a las entidades del hombre y Dios o la apropiación por la mujer de estas entidades. La imagen del último verso es muy poderosa y alcanzada con mucha destreza. Representa lo mejor de Raúl Aceves.

Conocí una mujer de chocolate

de piel caoba brillante
para acariciarla con manos calientes
una mujer que llovía largos cabellos negros
como gotas larguísimas de una miel de
    abejas africanas
me bebería la taza humeante de sus ojos
    una noche de frío
y en sus piernas de cedro me abrazaría
como el viento se abraza de las palmeras
    que tumba
para contemplarles las raíces

RAÚL ACEVES

I knew a woman made of chocolate

with polished mahogany skin
to be caressed with hot hands
a woman that rained long black tresses
like the longest drops of honey from
    African bees
I would drink the steaming cup of her eyes
    on a cold night
and with her legs of cedar she would embrace me
like the palm trees embrace the wind
        which fells them
to meditate on their roots.

RAÚL ACEVES
(Trans. Benjamin Clausen)

Para comprender el poder de la mujer

Imagine que eso que está frente a usted
no es una mujer
no es algo que tenga nombre

Imagine que eso no puede verdaderamente
ser mirado, ni tocado, ni acechado

Imagine que se trata de una fuerza
desnuda, telúrica, impersonal
como un abismo, una fiera, un volcán

Imagine que se trata de un vórtice irrestible
como la puerta del nacimiento

Imagine que usted es parte de ella
y que sólo mediante el truco de la mente
se siente separado de eso

Imagine que usted no puede existir sin ella
ni ella sin usted

Imagine la posibilidad de ser absorbido
en el no ser de ELLA
el magma del Universo

RAÚL ACEVES

To Comprehend the Power of Woman

Imagine what is in front of you
is not a woman
is not anything that has a name

Imagine it cannot truly
be seen, nor touched, nor watched

Imagine it is a force
naked, telluric, impersonal
like an abyss, a wild animal, a volcano

Imagine it is an irresistible vortex
like the gateway of birth

Imagine that you are part of her
that merely by a trick of the mind
you feel separate

Imagine that you cannot exist without her
nor she without you

Imagine the possibility of being absorbed
in the non-being of HER
the magma of the Universe

RAÚL ACEVES
(Trans. Benjamin Clausen)

Mujer usa labios

su boca flor de dos pétalos
su flor dos gajos de fruta incomibles
que pronuncian deseos
gajos de lo indecible
labios que al fin se quedan resignados
al silencio de su rajada

Mujer usa ser hombre
para conocerse desde él,
desde allá;
mujer usa ser Dios
cuando el alma se le sale
y ya no quiere volver
a su cuerpo al fin vacío
como estrella en la carne de la noche

RAÚL ACEVES

Woman uses lips

her mouth a two petal flower
her flower two slices of inedible fruit
which pronounce desires
slices of the unutterable
lips which at last resign themselves
to the silence of the cleft between them

Woman uses being man
to know herself from him,
from over there;
woman uses being God
when her soul escapes her
and no longer wants to return
to her body, vacant at last,
like a star in the flesh of the night

RAÚL ACEVES
(Trans. Benjamin Clausen)

END NOTES

1. La Casa de la Palabra y las Imágenes es del Departamento de Estudios Literarios del Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades de la Universidad de Guadalajara, donde se realiza labor de investigación literaria y difusión de las artes. El edificio de este departamento cuenta con una biblioteca, una galería para exposiciones y presentación de lecturas literarias, recitales de música, obras de teatro, etc. Es sede de dos posgrados: una Maestría en Literaturas del Siglo XX, y un Doctorado en Letras. Participa en actividades con otras instancias académicas oficiales y no oficiales, como la Feria International del Libro y la Cátedra Julio Cortázar.

2. La poesía posrevolucionaria apareció en 1931 y duró hasta los años cincuenta. Sintetizó las preocupaciones artísticas a las cuales se dedicaron los "Contemporáneos" junto con la conciencia social que se despertó en la literatura de la Revolución.

3. Un grupo de escritores jovenes que en 1928 empezaron a reunirse en torno a la revista *Los Contemporáneos* y cuya obra poética puede ser la más importante del siglo XX.

4. Un término usado por Frank Dauster en su libro *The Double Strand* y que refiere a los escritores del movimiento posrevolucionario, específicamente los que trabajaron en las revistas *Taller y Tierra Nueva.*

5. El movimiento modernista en México empezó en 1888 como una reacción contra el romanticismo y duró hsta los principios del siglo XX. Su poesía es cosmopolita y demuestra mucha influencia de la estética de Europa de la época.

6. Hay dos escuelas principales de vanguardia en la poesía mexicana, los estridentistas y los "Contemporáneos". Ambos fueron influidos por la estética de Europa y otros movimientos latinoaméricanos.

7. Un término nebuloso para los poetas mexicanos que nacieron en los años cincuenta y buscan una poesía sencilla, sin la densidad de las ideas que aparece en la obra de los poetas posrevolucionarias como Octavior Paz.

8. Un término usado por Frank Dauster en *The Double Strand* y que refiere a un grupo de poetas parecido a la "Generación de los años ochenta." Según Dauster estos poetas son influídos muchos por el contexto social muy tumultuoso de su época, por ejemplo el terremoto que ocurrió en la ciudad de México en 1985.

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Mischievous Shoes

CHRIS KLIMAS

It happens to everyone.

Lindsey's shoes are red. Dark red, kind of. They have white laces and they're almost a year old. Her toes have started to press against the tips of her shoes, but she's done so many interesting things with them that she's not ready to give them up yet. She was a lion tamer for Halloween in them. She's drawn the faces of the friends who've moved away under the soles. They're the first shoes that she, instead of her father, got to pick out, and they're beautiful and they make funny thick noises when she taps them against the floor when she's bored. They're what she looks forward to when she gets dressed in the morning.

But then they begin to misbehave. At first they do it in small ways. On a field trip to the zoo, when everyone goes up to look at the koalas, her shoes start to lead her towards the cave where the poisonous dart frogs live. Maybe it's true that she liked them more than the furry things, but it was her shoes that made her feet move, that made her get in trouble when the teacher noticed her slipping down the hallway towards the exit.

And when she loses track of time on the way home from school because she's so occupied with looking at things—sometimes the empty townhouses full of furniture so new that they look like models instead of real chairs and tables, or sometimes the tiny shiny pebbles embedded in the sidewalk—her ankles twist because her shoes have started to lead her somewhere else. Sometimes, it's towards the sewer grate hidden on top of the hill. It's loose enough that she can slide a leg in and then change her mind. Sometimes they want to lead Lindsey back

to school, and only after she checks to make sure that she hasn't left any of her books behind does she stares down furiously at her shoes, willing them to calm down.

They always relent eventually, and she is free to continue down the sidewalk towards home, the path she wants to take, she thinks . . . she thinks. . . .

When the other kids notice it happening, she has to make up an uneasy smile and pretend that her shoelaces were becoming untied, even though she's got purple monster bowbiters to keep them in place. They don't laugh at her but they tell each other about her, the girl who doesn't know how to tie her shoes. The whispered sentences twist clumsily together in her memory: her parents have to do it for her every morning—isn't that so sad?—isn't she still a baby?—isn't she—isn't she—

Lindsey doesn't care. Because her shoes only misbehave sometimes, when she really ought to have been minding her way, and the only people who believe that she can't tie her shoelaces are the ones she doesn't like anyway, and besides, worrying about rebellious shoes is silly. She's going to be old enough soon that she can call herself almost old.

She doesn't give them up—she can't give them up—so she tries to make them like her enough that they'll do what she wants again. She takes them into the bathtub on Sundays and scrubs them down with the ruby soap that her older sister uses on her hands to keep them from growing scaly. Afterwards, she puts them on her windowsill and brings up the plants from downstairs to keep them company in the sun.

For a while, Lindsey believes that she's succeeded. But when she picks up her lunch tray after she finishes her Wednesday meal, her left shoe cuts tightly in front of her right, and in a moment that lasts less than two seconds but feels so remotely, deliciously long, her body comes

falling down, some of the students' eyes already picking up on incipient disaster, others still eating their sandwiches calmly, and then her legs collapse together like two weak tree branches and the tray goes straight vertical, peas beginning to trickle down its edge into a pile that her head will fall near, and the gravy begins to grope blindly towards the ground, and there is something spinning in her vision but she cannot recognize its shape and then there is a cold, sharp impact and she's on the ground.

Her shoes point smugly at the sky.

The laughter is so tight around her that it seems to come from nowhere. When she tries to get up, gravy swirls over her blue blouse in all kinds of directions and so she has to spend the rest of the school day with a wet, vaguely brown tinge to her clothes. The lunch ladies try to rinse it out but it only adds a vague, awful smell, the smell of the sponges that they use to swab down the tables. It takes so long to get through three hours, and now there must be a new story about her, the girl who trips over herself. Or maybe they've made something else up to explain the fallen expression she wears over her eyes and the soggy pencil trapped in her fingers.

The afternoon air is thin outside. The sidewalk she follows is plain pale white; the fields she looks at are well-trimmed green. The baseball diamonds are still flat and wet from last night's rainstorm.

"What do you want?" she asks her shoes.

But shoes don't answer questions. They only twitch around her soles towards the right, towards the street that mothers are using to drive their children home.

"Stop it," she says, but shoes don't listen, either. They pull harder, on her toes this time. Lindsey stamps her heels into the ground and looks as fiercely as she can at her shoes. Her left one tries to make a

furtive break towards the street but she holds it fast against the sidewalk.

"Where do you want to go?" she asks the shoes.

There's only one way to find out.

She takes a deep breath, just in case, and lets them walk. Her shoes—her favorite shoes, she reminds herself, her favorites—move with a unyielding cadence across the road just a few seconds before an deep green minivan would have hit her. Its horn comes honking after her but the sound isn't important enough for her to hear it. Walking on the opposite sidewalk feels just like walking on the one she should be taking, but when she looks across the road, her feet still mechanically marching at the ground, she feels a pang of something. Maybe it's regret—but she doesn't have time to think clearly—her feet keep begging for more speed—no, it's her shoes asking, not her feet—

Lindsey's shoes turn a corner and all of the paths she's ever taken before in her life disappear behind her. She doesn't catch the name of the road she's walking down, but it slopes down and down as it curves to the right, past houses full of empty garages and bicycles lying abandoned beside mailboxes. No cars or people or even birds come as she walks faster and faster. Her backpack slips from her shoulders and lands on ground that's already yards behind her.

The shoes lead her through processions of hills and curls of forests, through a road that diverges but seems to circle back onto itself, but still descends downhill. The last thoughts of home and school, the last memories of the people she knows, evaporate. Perhaps there are people now watching her, wondering why she walks so stiffly, but she sees no one.

She can no longer feel the friction of the ground, or even the slight impetus of her weight. Lindsey's never been lost in her life before—the

closest thing is when her father gets lost sometimes on the way to the beach, when the directions that he's followed for years blur in his mind, and he'd want to find a new path back to the way they needed to go, but her mother always insisted on turning around and going back the way they came, and always her father would give in—

The sun stings her, as if she were just waking up. She is standing on a road that appears to be going nowhere she recognizes, with thick-bodied trees growing in a blanket of dead leaves leading the way. There are two yellow lines cutting through the middle of the old, mottled asphalt and there is also a man lying in front of her.

He doesn't move and neither does she.

There is no wind pushing Lindsey forward, not even the pull of gravity downhill. It is her shoes that press her closer to the man. The sun drifts behind a cloud and the man remains still. He's lying on his stomach, and he's wearing a strangely formal set of clothing; a dark blue blazer and black slacks. She can see a hint of tie beneath his shirt collar. His arms are stretched out like an airplane's. And a wet patch in his blazer, as if a drink had been dropped on him, as if—

She lifts up her fingers and recognizes the color. It's blood.

Her arms turn rigid and yet the shoes will not let her run or even turn away. It drips along the surface of her fingers, leaving behind a profound rosy color and an odd, haunting warmth. She cannot take her eyes from its motion.

Impossibly, the man's head lifts up, the eyes opening. The hands clutch at the ground. The mouth opens, a word trembling on the lips, and then nothing. The eyes watch her as they fall back, the neck muscles release their grip, and finally, there is no more.

The shoes let go and Lindsey runs. She no longer cares what direction she chooses; she only wants to be somewhere other than inside

herself. Her legs almost skip along the surface of the road. There are no thoughts in her mind, no tears whipping behind her. There is nothing but a pair of yellow lines that lead her forward.

She rounds a corner and stops, because she realizes that she's standing at the opposite end of the road her house is on. The end that no one ever needs to use anymore because it leads nowhere anyone needs to go, not even to the dentist. She's only two minutes from home.

Lindsey walks slowly now, past houses she doesn't want to recognize. Perhaps there are people watching her again, shutting their curtains so that she won't see them, running to their front doors and locking them, because her hand, still hanging lifelessly from her arm, is as red as a beaten rosebush.

When the sidewalk guides her up the door to her own house, she remembers that her housekey is in her backpack, which must still be lying wherever it was that she dropped it. She can't remember where and she doesn't want to. She lifts a finger to the yellow plastic doorbell and presses. A flurry named her mother comes downstairs and opens the door.

Her mother asks, "What's wrong?"

Lindsey has to remember to speak.

"I can't explain it."

"Are you bleeding?" Her mother picks up her hand by the wrist and begins to look at it.

"It's only a tiny cut—" The words come out but they don't feel like lies. She pulls her arm from her mother and clutches it to her chest. "Please," she says, "Just let me into our house."

"I think we should go to the hospital—" her mother says but Lindsey raises her hand and states, "Look. It's healed already. I'm fine."

And then she's inside the house, and nothing else really matters.

They ask her four thousand times how it happened, and invent eight thousand possible ways that it could have happened, but she repeats to them that no, it didn't happen that way. She's fine. Eventually she is allowed to escape upstairs, and by suppertime, Lindsey has washed her hand clean. The red water swirls down the drain and disappears.

But she keeps the shoes on.

They ask again at dinner, but the only answer she can provide is the one she gives herself. In school she sees the man's outline through the half-closed blinds; his form is hidden in the houses she draws, his eyes in her suns. Always he is standing; always he is looking forward- not at her, but at something taller and farther away than herself. Once she believes that he is behind her in the lunch line, and almost drops her tray again when it's only short Terrence in his place. More stories are invented about her- why her eyes are red at the corners and why she no longer raises her hand in class- but she still doesn't care.

She sees him riding the garbage truck on Saturdays. She sees him under the dinner table. She sees him in the palm of her hand. And then he enters her dreams. She can distract herself with the details of the texture of his skin; she may observe the strayest of hairs along the back of his neck. Sometimes he no longer has a face. Sometimes she subtracts the hands growing loose and damp along his sides. Other times she removes the clothes around his body into a mist of unmemory. Once she even forgets his body entirely in her dreams.

But he's always there. He cannot be unseen.

One night on her favorite boardwalk, Lindsey asks him, "Why did I find you?"

His mouth opens into a darkness and the bolts of the Ferris wheel above them begin to loosen. "Did you need to?" His voice is a darker, masculine version of her own.

"No," she says.

He walks away from her but she follows. The man wanders through a crowd of children — some of their faces smirking as if a long-ago joke is just reborn in their minds — and, discovering a hole in the boardwalk, he falls through.

In the dark sand she finds him facedown. The surf rolls backwards, retreating from its resting point deep in the sand towards the waiting ocean; shadows retreat from the round wood posts holding up the boardwalk. She kneels before him and, surprising herself, reaches a hand towards him. Slowly it goes, piercing the air with her fingertips and then, before she can touch him, he raises his head and asks, "Did you want to?"

"No," she says.

He sinks into the sand, furrowing a brown mist behind him. She waits for a long time, but the sand doesn't react. She walks a little and peeks up through the cracks in the boardwalk. There doesn't seem to be a sun in the sky.

"I didn't mean to," she says. "It wasn't me. It was just my shoes taking me someplace I didn't want to go—it's not my fault. Won't you leave alone?"

Three waves slide up the sand together, leaving a whisper behind: "No."

Lindsey sits on the ground. It's cool and dense. She asks, "Why not?"

The man behind her says, "Why did you find me?"

"My shoes," she says without turning around.

"But shoes don't do anything they aren't told to."

She is about to say something but it catches in her mind because she realizes that she doesn't know whether what he's said is true or

not—though it must be—though it mustn't be—and the man begins to say something else, but she isn't there to listen, for she's woken up in a bright curtained haze, at home, in her bedroom. She remembers where she is once she can see her arms and legs.

In her nightgown she picks the shoes up from underneath her bed and places them at the bottom most part of her closet, beneath the empty shoeboxes and the receipts that belong to clothes that don't fit her anymore. Lindsey comes downstairs; already there is the warm scent of breakfast twisting through the spaces of the house.

Quietly, her feet move forward.

Green

I. Photographs

Boxes of them, sorted by color.
Gray for the years of her hazy childhood,
pink for college, green for children.
I'm green. She flares up in gold
when she is with the three of us.

II. Conversations

She and I drove past the cherry orchard
with its knobby crawling trees.
I think she could read my mind,
the spaces of light behind my eyelids.
She told me once, *my children are my reason for living.*
So how can I tell her now that she is my breath,
my sky, *my* reason?

III. Winter

She was like this to me: human, fragile, built of bone.
Hairless. I saw my childhood in her scalp.
What was it like, to have all of me inside her?
Is the pain she had when I left her the same
I feel as she leaves me now?

IV. New Year

At midnight I was orphaned.
I looked for signs - shadows, light, the smell of vanilla.
I could see a blond June day rising
to meet her, and then I fell.
I still await the landing.

V. After

I can't see ahead for the lengths of sleep
coiling around me. It will be January forever.
The smell of space surrounds me,
pulls me (I imagine) toward her.
She shocks me with dreams.
In my sleep she is golden, and smiling,
and brimming with green.

LAURA MAYLENE WALTER

Dragons and Foucault: A History of the Dangerous and Unseen

DENNIS WILSON

Dragon—a scaly lizardlike serpent of various types and sizes,
with one to many heads, wings or no wings, legs or no legs.
Some can talk with humans and many guard treasure.
Western dragons are fierce, powerful, wise, and miserly.
They breath fire and are generally destructive.

Eric Carle, *Dragons, Dragons, and Other Creatures that Never Were.*

Oh, tongue, give sound to joy and sing
of hope and promise on dragonwing!

Anne McCaffrey

s children, some of us had a fascination with dragons: sleek, prismatic scales, curling tails, long, milk-white teeth, surrounded by a temperate mist of steam and the possibility of guttural fire. And those eyes—slitted, bright as wet stones, deeply intelligent. It was the contradiction between those eyes and the rest of the creature that drew us in; wisdom in the context of terrible power, lonesome knowledge guarded by an almost sardonic, possibly tragic context of fire and claws. We imagined dragons alone, without companions, steeping in their dark and humid caves. Guarding something—treasure, themselves, ancient secrets.

In our mind's eye we saw the dragons hunted, torn from their caves by straining men with thick nets and gleaming swords, exhaling fire and unfurling their wings against what they must have known was coming: their terrible extinction, the time when men became too afraid of their fusion of knowledge and power to allow them to lead even marginal, secluded lives. The dragons were captured, slain, and their

eight-chambered hearts were presented to the king for consumption.

Some of us, having grown, still see dragons in the world around us. We sense their heat, their nearby sleeping potency, their shrouded secrets. We sense dragons not as tangible, living creatures but merely the essence of what they represent; dangerous knowledge, frightening and discerning. We sense not literal dragons but what we as a national community have sought, captured, and hidden to the best of our ability- unsettling thoughts or realities, uncomfortable or abnormal individuals, keen and powerful institutions, alternate lifestyles, medicines, behaviors, apparent contradictions that do not fit our simple assumptions and prejudices. We approach these modern dragons with the same fascinated trepidation as we did when we were children; we want to know them, but not too closely. We respect and fear them.

I have seen a few dragons in my lifetime.

They can quote Ralph Waldo Emerson, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, and ancient Greek gods and goddesses.

They can connect with the foundation of other human beings in an instant, searing through the layers of rhetoric and protection we wind around ourselves and getting straight at what bothers us, what we have hidden from ourselves and others because it is painful, difficult, and real.

They have bodies thick as castles, with sharp moats and sinuous pillars showing vaguely through nondescript t-shirts and white cotton sweatpants.

They have a combined list of convictions and felonies that might be considered exhaustive. Most of them have accumulated multiple life sentences after being charged with such acts as first- or second-degree murder, rape, possession of a deadly weapon, robbery, drug trafficking, and so on.

I first met them in November, at the Delaware County Correctional Center, where many of them will be spending the rest of their lives. They are all members of a program called Project Aware, a multistep and holistic counseling and prevention program that targets troubled teens who are often moments away from making the same mistakes the prisoners made years ago. It is not a program centered around scaring children by yelling in their faces and depicting the brutal realities of prison life. It is aimed at getting the children to confront their own pasts, to admit to their own human needs and weaknesses that have often been brutally exploited or simply remiss. This is done through group counseling, follow-up sessions, and parent-child meetings, and it is all organized and led by the prisoners.

I have seen this program work. I have watched as the prisoners stood in front of a group of troubled children and talked about their own pasts, their own unchangeable mistakes, their own regrets and anger. I have seen the prisoners question individual children, allowing the children to come to important self-realizations about their own actions and their own very-much avoidable future mistakes, regrets, and anger. I have witnessed these prisoners as they began to affect and alter the course of dangerously unstable lives.

And yet they remain prisoners; which means that they are not only locked away but invisible to the general populace, unspoken syllables in our national dialogue. This is because they represent a fundamental contradiction that is in opposition to what some people and institutions want everyone to believe: that prisoners are not people, that they are merely guilty, evil, unintelligent, vindictive, unrepentant. The men of Project Aware are anything but this; they are compassionate, very intelligent, gentle, and genuinely concerned about the lives of troubled children. Because of this, they are largely unseen and the pro-

gram that they began over twenty years ago is in a constant threat of extinction.

French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault is obsessed with the dragons of today. He has shown throughout his studies that the men of Project Aware do not represent isolated circumstances, but rather stand, as we all do, as participants in the unraveling of a present that has been shaped by a history of deliberate light and shadows. Most (if not all) of his studies are directed at an analysis of the ways in which social power, or relationships of power, shape our modern institutions (prisons, hospitals, schools, military, families). The specifics of this power are sometimes revealing, in the way that the visibility of a monarch's crown and staff add to his atmosphere of power. Many times, however, relationships of power do their best to conceal or simplify; modern-day prisons and asylums are built to be invisible to the surrounding communities; the brutal aftereffects of corporate globalization are rarely seen in news broadcasts or accepted media; homeopathic medicines remain mythical and unaccepted. Like the dragons of juvenile fantasy, these realities are hidden away because they escape the accepted order, they contradict established notions of what is normal and what is not.

As Foucault shows throughout his literature, there are very definite reasons for these acts of concealing and revealing. These reasons, Foucault shows, are identified by a careful analysis of history that takes into account the objectives and potential of relationships of power and the ways in which knowledge, always subjective, can be created by those individuals or institutions that wield sufficient power. In this way, the powerful can afford to imprison, execute, or make abnormal those modern-day dragons that represent a threat to an unthinking acceptance of the way things are. And by that definition, Foucault himself would be a dangerous dragon, indeed.

Perhaps Foucault understands that oftentimes the human mind deals best with images-images of violence, of passion, of incomprehension, of failure, or of some kind of victory; human silhouettes on the whitewashed walls of Hiroshima, or a single frozen kiss in the middle of a combustive Parisian avenue. Perhaps this is why Foucault begins his book *Discipline and Punish* with a sequence of images that resonate long after the book has been filed away. The first image is of a man who has committed that most unforgivable of crimes, regicide; he has threatened the king's body, and the unashamed power and authority that it manifests. The man is displayed, cut, burnt, humiliated, judged, drawn, quartered, dismembered. His remains are choked with fire and dispersed. The second image, following immediately, is a list of rules for juvenile criminals, which we can imagine posted eminently on the wall. In this list, composed eighty years after the death of the regicide, there are no less than 28 rules, separating and directing nearly every aspect of the inmate's lives—their work habits, their sleeping schedule, their recreation time, their prayers. With these two concrete images, Foucault has both introduced and concluded the project contained within the pages of *Discipline and Punish*—the project of tracing the generation of the prison system and its adaptation to different contexts of power and a changing productive world. All of these changes are tied together with certain technologies and innovations and an interconnecting web of truth, power, and knowledge whose implications reach well beyond the steel confines of the prison.

The transition from the kind of open punishment represented in the first image to the implementation of the less overt yet more insidious form of discipline displayed in the second cannot be explained by simple images. The maturation of the former to the latter represents not the progressive or slowly victorious nature of humanitarianism but the gradual disembodiment and dispersal of societal power. As Fou-

cault states in *Discipline and Punish* and throughout his writings, this kind of development went hand-in-hand with the transition from an economy of feudalism to one of capitalism- the methods of production shifted, and so too did the manifestations of wealth, the ideas about health and human sanity, the discourse surrounding sexuality, the institutions of criminality and punishment, and so on. These changes were all representative of the changing character of power throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, in Europe and elsewhere; a power that was alternating from prohibitive to proscribed, from visible to invisible, from localized to diffused—a power that "traverses and produces things, [that] induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse."[1]

Once again, Michel Foucault uses concrete representations to attest to his theories. Throughout *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault uses the depiction of the *body* to add depth to his conjectures—the body of the king, and the body of the condemned. Both of these bodies assert themselves as the manifestations of power in the early history of authority and punishment. The body of the king, draped in all the startling regalia of royalty, signaled the undeniability of sovereign power—the cloak, the jewels, the oceans of velvet all attested to a sense of authority that was overt, overbearing, collected, and restrictive. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the condemned, whose torn body represented not authority but the carrying-out of authority, not law but the application of the law—collected, yes; collected and displayed because it shared with the body of the king the necessity of public exhibition and all the formalities of conspicuous power.

But over time, the realities of that power shifted. Feudalism began its long march to free market capitalism; wealth shifted from land ownership to speculation and industrial profit; the useful body shifted

from the indebted peasant to the alienated factory worker; ideology rejected the power of the king in favor of the power of the people—but in reality, according to Foucault, the people merely became vehicles for a new kind of power rather than the bearers of a power that was, in the original sense of the words, truly democratic. The power manifested in the body of the king, once so concentrated and acute, had measured itself out into and throughout the population—in the architecture, the medicine, the family, the schools. This new power, as Foucault later demonstrates, was embodied not in the king but on the parade grounds, where thousands upon thousands of "docile bodies" were regimented, disciplined, controlled from the inside. In the realm of penality, the spectacle of punishment had disappeared; the body of the condemned was now held in private, as the authority vested in the penal system now rested almost completely on the conviction itself, and on the myriad threats exhumed from the mere existence of the prison and the machinations of the justice system.[2] Today, these same bodies remain invisible; the bodies of the five prisoners of Project Aware are enveloped by the very same institution, men who like straining dragons unfurl against their cages but remain largely unseen and forever marked, in Manichean totality, as "criminals."

This new distribution of power came about not as an act of chance nor as a result of some international conspiracy—the lines of its development simply trace the accumulation of "local and particular" benefits for those groups of people who sought to gain or perpetuate their governing hold on society.[3] These benefits both differ and overlap with each discipline, be it medical science or the military, international business or education; Foucault notes that "the interplay of the family, medicine, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, the school and justice doesn't have the effect of homogenizing these different instances but of estab-

lishing connections, cross-references, complementarities and demarcations between them which assume that each instance retains to some extent its own special modalities."[4]

In the realm of the penal system, Foucault points out some of the benefits accrued by those in charge of the system, benefits obscured beneath the language of humanitarian progressivism. Foucault states that, among other things, "justice no longer takes public responsibility for the violence that is bound up with its practice. If it too strikes, if it too kills, it is not as a glorification of its strength, but as an element of itself that it is obliged to tolerate, that it finds difficult to account for. The apportioning of blame is redistributed...Now... it is the conviction itself that marks the offender with the unequivocally negative sign: the publicity has shifted to the trial, and to the sentence; the execution itself is like an additional shame that justice is ashamed to impose on the condemned man...those who carry out the penalty tend to become an autonomous sector; justice is relieved of responsibility for it by a bureaucratic concealment of the penalty itself."[5]

A socio-historical exploration of the various technologies and disciplinary mechanisms that made this new kind of power possible helps to reveal the nature and reality of this power. Foucault speaks of 'discipline' as a "modest, suspicious power" which "'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals as both objects and as instruments of its exercise."[6] Along these lines he highlights numerous examples that bring attention to the ways in which the new distribution of power has manifested itself in institutional, largely self-perpetuating practices—practices that generate obedience to a certain idea, establishment, or way of life.

In the realm of the penal system, Foucault discusses at length the idea of the all-seeing gaze, or the panopticon. Foucault states that whereas earlier (in the prison system and elsewhere) power had been

exerted through its display of force and "patches of darkness," after the disembodiment of power that took place during the 18th century, authority became an exercise in the "eliminat[ion] of the shadowy areas of society and the institution of an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself."[7] There are many benefits that came along with the development of this powerful gaze; namely, in comparison to previous machinations of control, the panopticon was both less expensive and more total. Foucault states that the panopticon creates "power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost."[8] The power of this new panopticism stems from the fact that it is self-perpetuating and internalized, and as such its implications reach well beyond the penal system—panopticism has been realized not only in the architecture of modern prisons but also in the distribution and functioning of health and the medical sciences, in the disciplinary regions of the military, the cubicled labyrinth of the workplace, and in society in general, where conspicuous consumption and the ever present camera keeps us all watched, judged, and controlled. This is the kind of technology of power that Foucault refers to throughout his writing—the new disciplinary mechanisms that enter our everyday discourse and lay at the root of our assumptions, a form of power that has been so dissolved that "no one, either the watcher or the watched, can escape."[9]

Foucault does not end his discussion of disciplinary mechanisms with the panopticon. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault mentions other forms of widespread and internalized control; he mentions the examination, which derives its power from its ability to individualize, objectify, compare, judge, document, produce knowledge, and carry sentence.[10] Foucault's exploration of this topic seems to acquire a near-

mystical quality as it pre-empts a world in which standardized testing is the norm and the education of persons from the ages of 3 to 23 is shaped completely by questions that already exist, and answers that assert themselves as true without any verification.

Throughout his writings Foucault also talks about the role of "experts" and public opinion in the maintenance of these new systems of power. Like the examination, the functioning of these two disciplinary mechanisms rests on one of Foucault's major philosophical and sociological concerns—the production of truth. For Foucault, the concept of truth does not carry with it the accouterments of its traditional definition—it is not somehow objective, somehow super-human, somehow impartially correct or quantifiable. Rather, truth is created by humans to govern humans, truth is a furnishing of a certain economic context, a certain political context, a certain society of desires and ambitions; truth is not a question of scientific verification but rather "a question of what governs statements and the way in which they govern each other"[11] so that a sense of the scientific is created, causing truth to appear acceptable and unbiased.

With this said, it is easy to comprehend the pivotal role that experts and public opinion hold in the establishment of "truth" and the maintenance of disciplinary mechanisms; experts, through their perception as equitable, dispassionate "scientists" (and, as will be discussed, through the support of the power that their "truths" create) are able to occasion a system of truth whose implications, assumptions, and consequences are imbibed without question. The same goes for the manufacturing of "public opinion," which (through "scientific" polls, popular representatives, magazine and newspaper articles, ideology, and so on) seeks to tell us what we are thinking; or, perhaps more accurately, what is acceptable for us to think, to proclaim both in the company of

others and in the invaded quietude of our own souls. In this way truth produces and thrives in "multiple forms of constraint," in the amazing capacity of the modern intellect to accept, to inter, to believe, and to obey.

At this point, the cyclical relationship between the creation of truth, the production of knowledge, and the perpetuation of power should be evident. In essence, each element produces and is produced by the others. The formulation of truth—by experts and public opinion, by institutions and corporations—creates a distinct kind of power that, in turn, allows these entities to generate more truths, to shape additional assumptions and opinions which will generate more power, and so on, ad infinitum. Thus, Foucault concludes that "'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'regime' of truth."[12]

It seems that the web of truth and power that Foucault has identified is all-consuming, even more airtight than the glass and sliding gates that contain the men and women and children of the Delaware County Correctional Center, of asylums and office buildings throughout the world. Foucault, however, asserts that there is a response to this cycle—a response that seeks not to break the cycle, but to dissect and understand it as it seeks to dissect and identify us; Foucault states that "The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses—or what's in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. . . It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power . . . but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time."[13] The "problem," in other words, is to continue Foucault's unfinished project of compiling a history of the

present to prepare for an understanding of the future.

The problem lies with images—seeing through them, through their truths and insinuations, through their transitions and their stability. It lies in being able to understand the relationship between a gallows and a time-table, between a bomb and a kiss, between a man in prison and ourselves. And perhaps Foucault does indeed understand the power of images, their sanctity and their irreverence, their headlights and their echoes. But perhaps, also, the strength of Foucault's writing is that it allows us, with the proper vigilance, to seek out and find these images, and to grasp at the beauty and tragedy that lies at their periphery, that spreads into their center; Foucault stands us at the entrance of the heated, dark, and intimidating cave, and asks us to find the dragons within.

END NOTES

1. Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings, 1972/1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 119.
2. Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995), 9.
3. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 159.
4. Ibid., 159.
5. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 9.
6. Ibid., 170.
7. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 155.
8. Ibid., 155.
9. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 159.
10. Ibid., 184-194.

11. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 112.
12. Ibid., 133.
13. Ibid., 133.

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Drive

The sky is dark and the desert
wind whispers like insistent fingers over the windshield.
There is no moon.
I have been driving for what seems like ice
ages, and before my eyes the highway
wavers like a mirage, drawn in swirling dust.

It seems like everything here is coated with dust.
My windows are open to the empty desert
and the mindless drone of the deserted highway,
and the world has become what I see through the windshield:
a vast silence. My spine crackles with ice
and I find myself wishing for the moon,

just a tiny thumbnail of moon,
but this sky is singularly owned by blackness. Dust
parches my throat and again I feel that ice
on the back of my neck—only a tendril of desert
reaching out to me. The windshield
reveals no answers, only this unmarked highway.

Sooner or later we all come to a highway
like this, under a sky with no moon.
Sooner or later we all look out a windshield
like this, swept by dust,
onto trackless and barren desert
like this, and in that moment the icy

hand of something dark turns our own fingers to ice.
This is a highway
where we take the desert
in deep, into our bones, and are swallowed, like the moon.
On this road we are reduced to the dust
we are, returning spiraling onto the windshield

of the next passing car, a windshield
the next passing driver stares out of, ice
forming in his eyes. And to dust
shall he return in his own time, here on the highway,
unnoticed, without even the bland pale face of the moon
to gaze at as he becomes part of the desert.

I have become dust as I drive this highway;
I have become the windshield through which the moon
is swallowed; in the icy, hypnotic silence of road and sky, I have
become the desert

ANGIE HALEY

Saturdays at the Aurora Bar & Grill

This place isn't like the others. Same cigarette
Butts and water stains and initials sunk into wood.
And there's pool and pinball and they check
Your ID at the door and raise question-marked
Eyebrows coupled with accomplice grins.

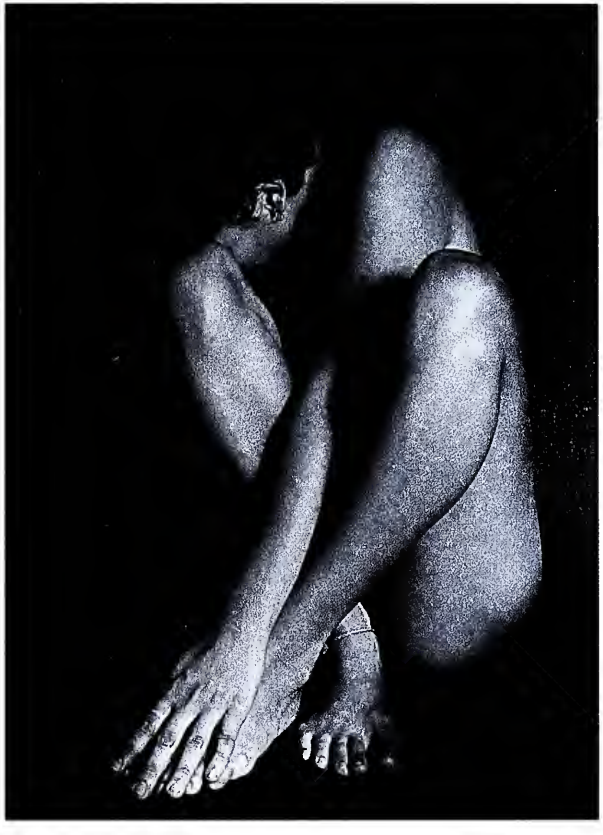
But I know he isn't like the others. He's a quiet
Drink in the corner, Clapton strumming low
On the jukebox, Saturday night at the bar
On Main Street in a town with salty water.
He drinks a Corona, slice of lime in its slender

Throat, and sometimes he shoots a round
Of pool, and something about his fingers tinged
Blue, branding sooty prints upon the bar, the silk-
Smooth cue makes the beer in the glass
In my hand ripple, a tawny lake brushed with need.

Maybe if I had a head for subtlety I could slide
Solids into the right corner pocket without looking
Like he disturbs my concentration, anchored a breath
From the tip of my elbow. I tremble when he makes
The jukebox sing, tips the bartender, buys another round

For one. Maybe someday I'll know his name. Maybe
Someday I'll stay home Saturdays, a book and a blanket
And a glass of water, silent, bland, and still.

JENNIFER REEDER



JESSICA KOENIG

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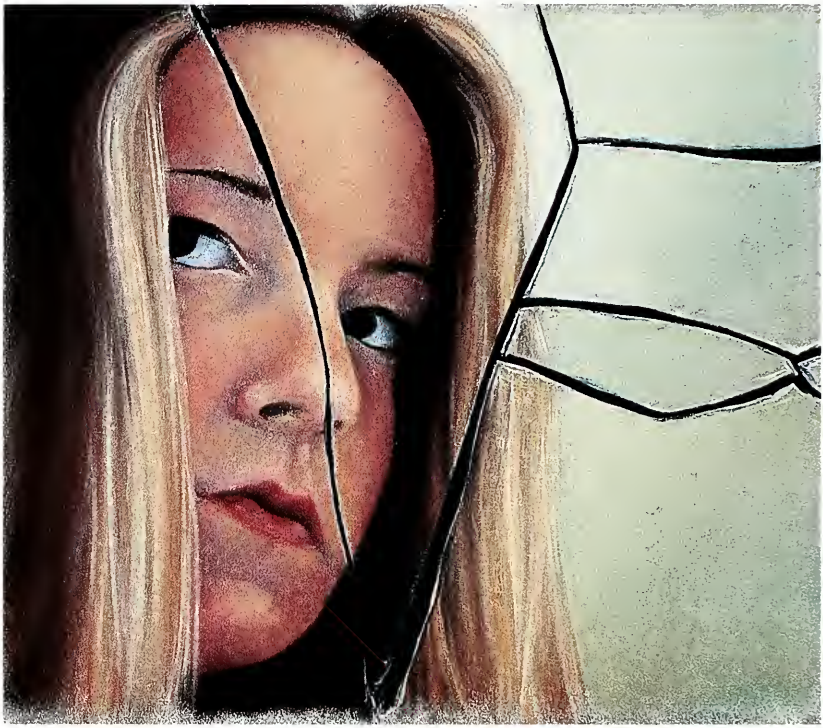

ADA MAHONEY

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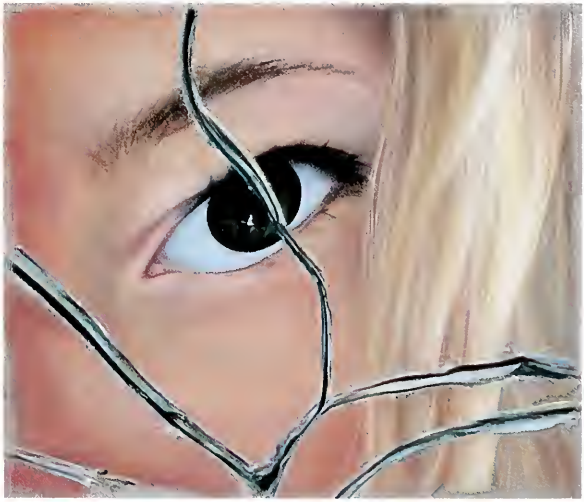
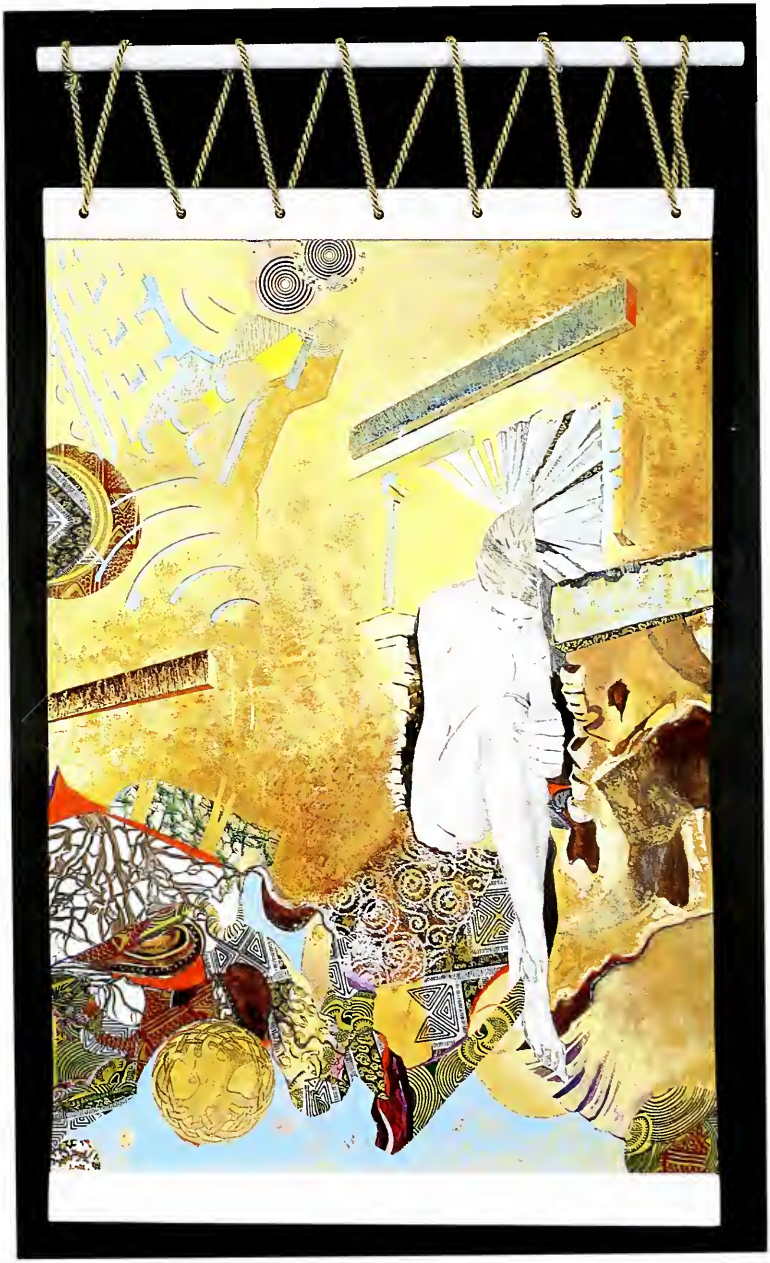
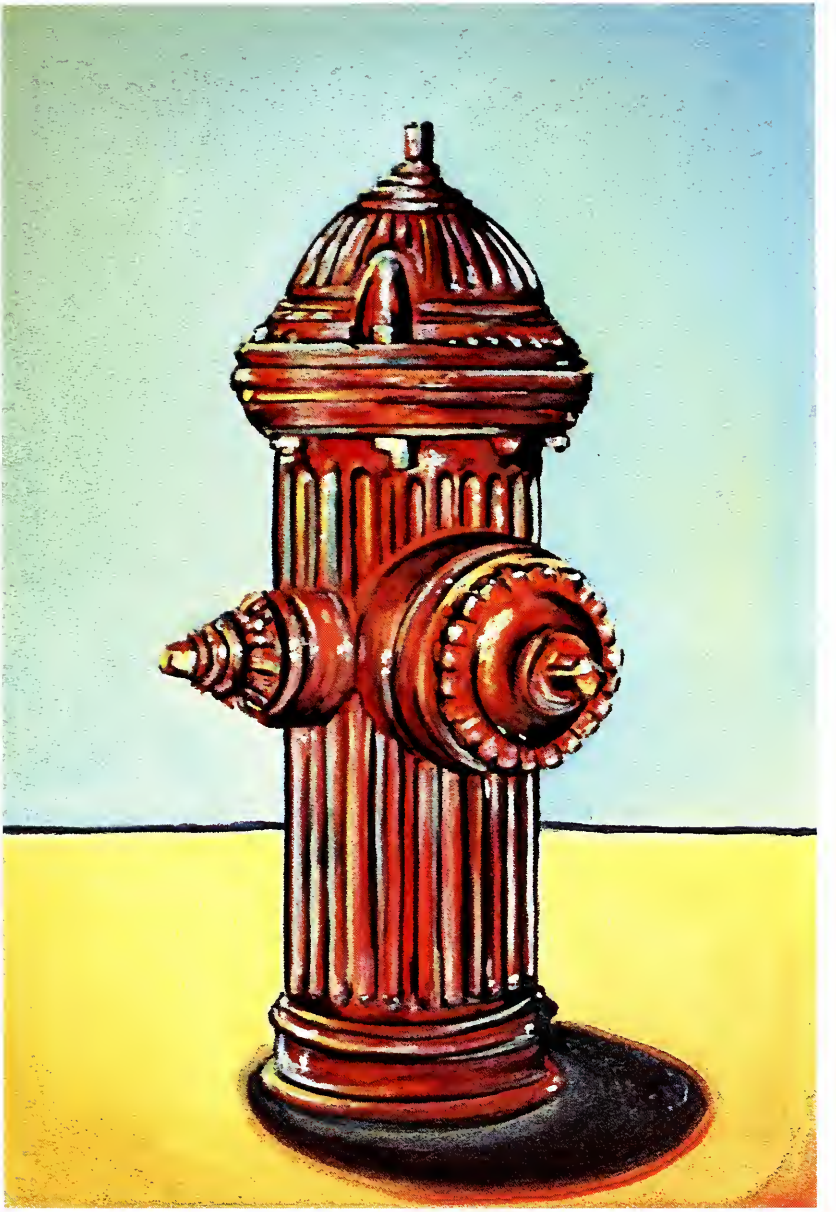




CATHERINE SHEAHAN
Inception



JILL COWPERTHWAITE
Hydrant

TERESA FEWLASS
Figure 1

TERESA FEWLASS
Figure 2

The Offering at the Puma Punku

TERESA FEWLASS

I never thought that I would get to go to Bolivia; Tiwanaku was a world away. But at the University of Pennsylvania Museum's Annual Maya Weekend in April of 2000, Dr. Jeanette Sherbondy introduced me to Dr. Alexei Vranich. Dr. Vranich held the archaeological permit for the Puma Punku in Tiwanaku and he was looking for people to work on site for the next season. Suddenly there was a real chance that I would get to work on a famous archaeological site in the Andes. In June, I boarded a plane for La Paz without even knowing exactly where I was supposed to go once the plane landed. Luckily Dr. Vranich met me at the airport. In the cold gray dawn of the Andean winter, our cab meandered across the altiplano. The adobe and brick city quickly dissipated into sparsely populated farm lands, the sacred white peaks of Illimani rose in the distance, and I was nearing Tiwanaku.

At the Puma Punku

The balks were decades old. On my third day at Tiwanaku, we were taking them down to get them out of the way. The Bolivian crew excavated the third balk, Balk C, in two levels. In the shadow of a massive stone slab which had been left pedestalled on a column of dirt, the little pot on top of Level 3 did not look like much. It was undecorated and the rim had been broken in. While the huge stone loomed over our shoulders, Maestro Ramón used a trowel blade to etch the dimensions of the offering pit into the hard packed ground. I cleaned around the pot, carefully brushing away flakes of dirt. I started finding more little pots. The Bolivian workers started getting very excited. People gathered to help me uncover the first small intact pots to be found at

the Puma Punku. Slowly brushing off the dirt, we revealed three little pots and four little plates.

The first pot that I had seen was also the smallest. It had a round body with a flat base and a handle set sideways like a coffee mug's handle that has been put on exactly wrong. The next largest pot had the same type of sideways handle as the first, but on a more angled body with a pedestal foot. A flat, round lid accompanied the second pot but was placed on top of the plates rather than on top of the pot. The largest pot had a long thin neck, a round body that angled down into a pointed base, and two tiny handles on the sides. Two of the little plates had small flat parts on the rims and the other two plates had the same small flat parts and sculpted bird heads on the ends opposite the flat, tail-feathery looking parts. The ceramics all were a pale reddish color and undecorated. Astonishingly, they were all intact. There was more. Beside the small pile of ceramics lay a small copper tube with a seam down the middle, and another small copper piece that was broken into two pieces (see Figure 1). The second copper piece was a thin stick with a flat arc on one end. The stick part was broken in the middle and both parts had bits of textile clinging to them. Scattered among the copper pieces in the dusty pit rested several small bones and a tiny tooth.

On site, the crew immediately began to debate whether the offering was from the colonial era, Inca, or Tiwanaku, argue over whether the bones belonged to an infant or child, and question the use of the copper pieces. Several days later, another crew member found a second offering in the unit wall about five meters north of the first offering. The second offering appeared to be at about the same depth and contained the same set of ceramics. However, it contained llama bones instead of the small ones in the first offering and did not contain any metal pieces.

The Andes

Andean culture has changed much over the millennia since humans first came to the Andes. Rising cultures seized the remnants of the older ones and used the structures to support their own beliefs and institutions. Beginning to expand in the mid-1400's, the Inca empire adopted the long fallen Tiwanaku and conquered the Chimu to seize their great city of Chan Chan.[1] Less than 100 years later, the Inca empire fell as it in turn was conquered by the Spanish who built a church atop the great Inca Temple of the Sun in Cusco. With each episode of conquering, the new cultures seized power from the old, but the supporting remnants of the old still reach forth.

The remnants of ancient Andean ritual play an important part in modern Andean religion. People in the Andes are Christian, but they practice their religion in ways that can seem very foreign and often very un-Christian. On Corpus Christi, saints' days, and other Christian holy days, the Andean people celebrate by singing, dancing, and parading in the town plazas. These words alone do not describe anything significantly different from Christian celebrations in other parts of the world, but the sights and sounds show distinct Andean ritual. At Christian celebrations, one might expect to hear stately organ music and see singers in choir robes but at Andean Christian celebrations in Sorata, Cusco, and Tiwanaku, I heard lively music from drums and native flutes and saw dancers and singers dressed in bright multicolored costumes with faux feline skins on their shoulders.

These celebrations are only one way in which the Andean people practice their religion. Many go to church for services just as Christians do all over the world, and also they visit Christian monuments. Recalling Inca reverence for high places, Andean people have placed huge statues of Jesus high on hills and mountain peaks overlooking towns and villages. One such statue overlooks Cusco and another resides in

the mountains east of Tiwanaku. During a trip to the Inca site of Iskanwaya, our archaeological crew stopped at a Jesus statue high in the mountains. It was a very special event for one of the Bolivian men and his son as they took a carefully wrapped offering up to the statue. Other offerings and rocks gathered around the base of the statue to mark the visits of previous pilgrims (see Figure 2). Our Bolivian drivers offered libations of alcohol and prayers for safe travel before we got back in the Land Cruisers and again drove off along the narrow, winding, steeply-sided, and rocky road.

Native Andean people still make offerings to Mother Earth, or *Pacha Mama*, and the Sacred Places. Made to nourish the Sacred Places, these modern offerings may contain many different objects including coca, llama fetuses, dried frogs, various seeds, colored wool, sugar, flowers, and candy, and are usually burned to complete the ritual.[2] The people make the offerings for fertile herds, prosperous fields, new homes, to counter illness or bad luck, and anytime they feel that they need a sort of extra little spiritual support. They also make offerings when starting new work, as I discovered when there was a question on site at the Puma Punku as to whether or not an offering should be made when new archaeological crews started working on new units. An offering had already been made to open the site for the season, so it was quickly decided by both Bolivian and American crew members that no new offerings had to be made for the site.

Modern Andean people comfortably combine both Christian and native religion in their rituals, but this was not always the case. Near the beginning of the 1600's, Catholic priests pressured Andean people to renounce their native religion. Some of the Catholic priests realized that they had to know about the indigenous Andean religion in order to fight it and convert the natives, so they collected stories about the Andean natives and studied them. One of these priests, Father Avila,

had collected and edited the myths and beliefs of local native people as written down by a man named Thomas. Although Avila meant to use the *Huarochiri Manuscript* against the native people, Thomas stated that he was writing down the myths and beliefs so they would be remembered. The Andean people had no written language and the Spanish were trying to destroy the living religion, so unless it was written down, the belief system could have been lost. However, Thomas also stated within the manuscript that the Andean people were adapting to the imposed Christian religion and secretly aligning their own religious ceremonies and celebrations with Christian holy days so that the priests would not bother them.[3] For example, the manuscript states that, "We know people schedule Chaupi Namca's rites during the month of June, in such a way that they almost coincide with Corpus Christi" and during this festival for Chaupi Namca, men wear puma skins.[4] Four hundred years after that was written down, I saw men dance in similar costumes at a Corpus Christi celebration in Sorata. The modern meshing of Christianity and indigenous Andean religion probably began as a facade meant only to ensure the survival of the Andean religion but that facade has evolved into a true interweaving of the two religions which has preserved aspects of both.

In the early 1600's, another Catholic priest, Father Bernabé Cobo, also studied the native people. Although by then many people no longer practiced or remembered much of the Inca politics and religion, Cobo visited important sites including Cusco and Tiwanaku, interviewed native people and wrote down descriptions of rituals, sacred places, and sacrifices. To demonstrate the harmful nature of the false Inca religion, Cobo carefully listed numerous shrines and sacred places and identified what offerings and sacrifices were made to each one. Some *guacas* were offered only shells, but he listed many to which children were sacrificed.[5] Cobo wrote that the Inca collected children as tribute

and that it was these children, and some children who were voluntarily given up by their parents, who were most frequently sacrificed. Made only for significant reasons such as famine or the illness of a leader, human sacrifices were the most important offerings and the Incas wanted the sacrificed children to be perfect and happy. Maidens had to have perfect bodies without any blemishes or moles. Infants were breast fed and children were given food and drink to ensure that they were content and happy before they were strangled. Second only to the human sacrifices, animal sacrifices were also very important for ritual offerings. Ideally, the Incas sacrificed domesticated animals such as llamas and guinea pigs because animals raised by humans were integral parts of the sustenance of the people.[6]

As stated above, both animals and people were sacrificed, but there is also variation among the human sacrifices. Sometimes the children were given by their parents and sometimes they were chosen from among the maidens. Both males and females, children and adult servants or warriors, were chosen to be sacrificed. Sometimes the sacrificial offerings were buried in temples and sometimes they were taken to sacred places like high mountain peaks. High in the snow-capped Andes, Johan Reinhard has found several Inca mummies preserved by the cold. On top of Pichu Pichu in Peru, Reinhard found two human sacrifices inside a raised earth platform. A 15 year-old girl whose head had been molded into the popular cone shape was the first Inca sacrifice to be found with such a deformation. She was killed by a blow to the head. Also inside the platform was the frozen body of a young male who may have been sacrificed with the girl as marriage partners. Two clothed male and female figurines were buried with the girl and boy as part of the offering. North of Pichu Pichu on Ampato, Reinhard found another sacrifice. The skeleton had been hit by lightning and the presence of volcanic ash indicated that the Inca made human sacrifices in response

to volcanic eruptions.[7] Reinhard found another lightning-scorched mummy on Cerro Llullaillaco in Argentina. Of the three sacrificed children found on Cerro Llullaillaco, the youngest girl had been struck by lightning, but the boy and older girl had not been struck. The 8 year-old girl was wrapped in a shawl secured with silver pins, called *tupus,* which were shaped like delicate crescents on the ends of sticks. Ceramics and textiles accompanied these three sacrifices as offerings and all three had peaceful expressions on their faces despite being sacrificed. The Inca wanted the pure and honored children to go to the gods comfortably and as the faces of these three sacrificed children showed, it is likely that they were already mercifully unconscious from the altitude and alcohol when they were killed.[8]

The Inca sacrificed children and built great temples before the Spanish came, but there were also Andean people before the Inca. Many cultures, including the Chimu and the Moche, thrived in the Andes before the Inca. They had rituals, burials, and sacrifices as the Inca later had, but none expanded into such a far-reaching empire. The Chimu had their own great city called Chan Chan. Chan Chan's tombs contained rich offerings and skeletons of young girls who may have been sacrificed to accompany the king in death, but the Incas looted Chan Chan when they conquered the Chimu.[9] Preceding the Chimu, the Moche had rich burials with many gold offerings and human sacrifice was a very important part of their culture. Moche priests acted as the deity called the Decapitator and used crescent-shaped blades called *tumis* to ritually sacrifice humans at the Huaca de la Luna. As the Incas later sacrificed children because of volcanic eruptions, the Moche sacrificed people because of El Niño. Unlike the Inca sacrifices, the Moche sacrifices may not have gone to death so quietly. Some Moche sacrifice skeletons had leg bones pulled from the pelvis joints and some are splayed as if they had been staked.[10]

Beginning around roughly the same time as the Moche culture, about 2,000 years ago, Tiwanaku started its slow rise, expansion and eventual fall. The two main structures at Tiwanaku are the Akapana and the Puma Punku. The Akapana is a stepped pyramid, composed of seven terraces, that symbolizes a sacred mountain. Channels drain water from the top of the Akapana down through the structure, just as channels of water flow through the more recent Inca structure at Machu Picchu. A moat surrounding the Akapana recalls the Island of the Sun and suggests that the pyramid also symbolizes the center of the world. The Akapana was both a ritual center and a residence, and both burials and offerings have been found there. A whole row of adult mummies was buried in seated positions facing a single male who held a puma shaped incense burner. An offering associated with the sealing of a room included llama figures, pins, a bone lip plug, obsidian and pieces of ceramics. Near the foundation and first terrace, offerings included headless skeletons of adult males, a 2 year-old child, and ceramics including *keros*. As shown by the headless skeletons, the taking of heads may have been an important part of Tiwanaku ritual sacrifice.[11]

The second of the two most important structures at Tiwanaku is the Puma Punku, or Gateway of the Lion. Like the Akapana, the Puma Punku was built to channel water down from the top of the structure. Unlike the Akapana, the Puma Punku is aligned directly between Lake Titicaca and the sacred Mount Illimani. The Puma Punku had steps leading onto the temple from the lake in the west and its eastern ritual platform faced the snowcapped mountains.[12] Hills rise on the sides to the north and south of the Puma Punku and seem to channel people from the lake to the temple to the mountains. At the temple, walking up the steps is suddenly like ascending a small mountain above the flat altiplano.

Although archaeologists started working on the Puma Punku more than one hundred years ago, the structure is only barely beginning to

be uncovered. Tiwanaku died around 1,000 BC after prolonged droughts and the temples were abandoned for hundreds of years.[13] It is likely that some people still went to the Akapana, Puma Punku, and other structures at Tiwanaku and made offerings there, because it is very difficult to ignore large stone buildings which rise off a very flat land, but Tiwanaku was largely neglected until the Inca empire expanded east and became interested in ancient Tiwanaku. The Inca empire never had to conquer Tiwanaku as it did the Chimu who followed the Moche, because the Tiwanaku culture died about 400 years before the Incas reached Tiwanaku. The Inca empire found the temples in ruins after hundreds of years of neglect and adopted Tiwanaku into its own cultural identity.[14] Tiwanaku helped the Inca to make connections through both time and space by expanding the Inca influence east to Tiwanaku and by linking the Incas to Tiwanaku's origin myths. It helped the Inca empire legitimize its expansion and power. Stone walls and ceramic sherds indicate that while at Tiwanaku, the Inca may have built rooms on the edges of the Puma Punku and made offerings. But the Inca empire was short-lived and the Spanish soon took Tiwanaku. Colonists looted Tiwanaku. Having visited Tiwanaku in 1610, Cobo noted that colonists had already torn the buildings apart looking for treasure and built churches out of Tiwanaku's strong stones.[15] Now the Puma Punku is a mound of tumbled rock. Massive blocks are fallen and dislocated like a giant puzzle and archaeologists are trying to put it back together.

The Offering

The sacrificial offering lay buried in the compact Andean soil for a long time before I began to excavate it. One of the first questions about the offering was just how long it had been buried. If, as originally identified, it was a colonial era offering, it would have been in the ground a

scanty 400 years. If it was an Inca offering, it would have been in the ground for around 500 years. And if it was a Tiwanaku offering, it could have been in the ground for 1,500 years. It might have been nice if the offering had been Tiwanaku because it would have contributed to the presentation of the Tiwanaku site and culture that the Bolivians were trying to establish to promote tourism at the site. However, the ceramics indicate that it is an Inca offering. Although they do not have any decorations to indicate their origins, the three pots closely match examples of Inca pots. The smallest one is a collared jar, the second pot with the lid is a pedestal bowl, and the third pot with the pointy bottom and slender neck is an arribalo for holding liquids such as *chicha*.[16] Although the heads on the plates look more like birds with pointed beaks, Bolivian crew members insisted that the heads represented ducks. In Cusco, I saw newly made sets of offering ceramics that contained almost exactly the same forms of pottery, but with painted decorations, so this combination of Inca offering vessels must be somewhat common.

The Inca offering contained not only Inca ceramics, but also bones. The bones were very small and judging by size, they could easily have been guinea pig bones. However, the consensus of the crew on site was that the tooth was a human tooth, so the bones must be human bones. Because the Inca sacrificed children of all ages and some adults, there seems to be no ritual preference for either age and thus no solely religious reason why the bones should not belong to a child of either age. The bones are so tiny that they can not even be seen in a photograph, so despite one Bolivian crew member's adamant insistence that the bones are from a seven year-old child, I think it is far more likely that if they are human, the tiny bones were from an infant.

The bones show that the offering was a sacrifice of an infant and the ceramics show that the offering was made during the Inca empire,

but the Inca infant offering also contained two small pieces of copper, one of which was broken. A piece of metal with a flat crescent on the end of a stick may be either a *tumi* or a *tupu*, but there are distinct differences between the two types of objects. As I saw in the museum at Iskanwaya and in Cusco, a *tumi*, or sacrificial knife, tends to be decorated with figures and have a handle opposite the crescent blade. A *tupu*, or pin, tends to be undecorated although it may have a circular or crescent shaped head. Pins were used to hold cloth together for securing mummy bundles and cloaks.[17] Although it was initially identified as a sacrificial knife, the broken copper piece in the offering is a pin. Not only does it look exactly like a pin, but it seems too small and delicate to be a functional sacrificial knife, and the textile clinging to both pieces of the object indicates that it was used to pierce cloth, just as a pin should do. Reinhard found *tupus* securing the cloaks on female sacrifices and securing the cloaks on the silver figures which accompanied the sacrifices,[18] so the presence of the *tupu* in the Feature 700 offering may indicate that the bones were human and that they were from a female.

The metal tube is another mystery. Andean people used bone tubes to sniff snuff and hold pigments,[19] but metal does not seem to be the best material for performing these tasks. Metals can discolor pigments, and I suspect many people would prefer not to stick a metal implement up their nostrils. Some metal llama and human figurines were formed by soldering tubes and pieces of metal together[20], but I did not see any other pieces of metal in the offering that would indicate that it had been part of a figurine, so the use of the copper tube remains a mystery.

Having resolved the previous questions and identified most of the components of the offering, I now question the meaning of the offering rather than its physical form. The infant offering is related to the llama

offering. They are in north-south alignment with each other and they both contain the same set of ceramic vessels, so it is likely that they were offered together as part of the same ritual. The ritual must have been a very important one because the Incas sacrificed both a human child and a domesticated llama. The physical alignment and contents demonstrate the symmetry between the two offerings, but alone they do not speak to the purpose of the offerings. No burials have been found nearby, but perhaps the offerings were associated with environmental changes or the coming of the Inca empire to Tiwanaku. The offerings may have been a sort of rededication or awakening of the temple after long abandonment. Maybe the offerings were associated with the Inca adoption of Tiwanaku into its own cultural identity. There are infinite possibilities as to what event the offering was associated with, but the Inca infant sacrifice and the llama sacrifice were offered for powerful reasons.

When I left Bolivia, the offering was not completely excavated. Because the bones appeared to be human, Dr. Vranich called for a Bolivian specialist to complete the excavation. Although the bones remained in the ground, I bagged the metal pieces and ceramics to be taken to the museum in Tiwanaku. It is unlikely that many people will ever see the ceramics I helped excavate, but I will remember them. Their dull red color was the same hue as the barren winter altiplano. With no trees, the winter vegetation limited to pale spiky grass, the red soil dominates the landscape. Even the adobe houses are made from the red soil. And in the adobe bricks, the people often include the old broken pieces of ceramics like the little pots in the offering.

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The Spicknall Murder Trial
The Role of Discretion

MARY MCAULIFFE

The Choptank River rolls slowly between Talbot and Dorchester counties on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore, flowing out to the Chesapeake Bay. A half-mile from the Choptank, on the morning of September 8, 1999, 3-year-old Destiny Spicknall and her 2-year-old brother Richie were murdered in the backseat of their grandfather's Jeep Wrangler, shot at point-blank range as they slept in their car- safety seats. They were killed by their father, Richard Spicknall II. Spicknall then plunged into the Choptank River; he would later claim to police that an armed hitchhiker had hijacked the car, pushed him into the river, and driven away with the children.

From the moment Spicknall was arrested by police, his fate rested largely in the hands of prosecutorial and judicial discretion. The murder trial of Richard Spicknall II demonstrates the powerful influence of prosecutorial and judicial discretion on the strategy of the defense team and on the eventual verdict and sentence.

In the American criminal justice system, the judicial process begins with the prosecutor's exercise of discretion. He must decide whether or not to initiate prosecution against the defendant and charge him with specific charges.[1] Not all crimes are tried. "As long as the prosecutor has probable cause to believe that the accused committed an offense defined by statute, the decision whether or not to prosecute, and what charge to file or bring before a grand jury, generally rests entirely in his discretion."[2] Limited by time and energy constraints, the prosecutor must consider the costs of taking the case to court.[3] When the

Spicknall case landed on the desk of Talbot County State's Attorney Scott Patterson in September of 1999, the decision to prosecute Richard Spicknall II for the murder of his children was completely under his discretion. However, in making the decision to prosecute Spicknall, Patterson had to consider several circumstances of the case including the defendant's guilt and the availability of valuable evidence.

The prosecutor's decision to press charges hinges upon his view of the "accused's guilt of the crime to be charged."[4] Looking at the facts of the *Spicknall* case, Patterson undoubtedly believed that the defendant had intentionally murdered his two children. Spicknall not only voluntarily confessed to shooting the children, but also tried to cover up his crime by staging a carjacking. In fact, because Spicknall admitted to police that he had thought about killing his kids prior to pulling the trigger, he had committed the more serious crime of *premeditated* murder with the intent to kill. Patterson personally believed that Spicknall was guilty of murder, making him obligated to prosecute the defendant and seek punishment by the State for Spicknall's crime against society.

After determining the defendant's guilt, the prosecutor considers the amount of substantial evidence in the case when making the decision to prosecute the defendant. He has to "consider not only the worth of the prosecution's testimony, but also the likelihood of its availability" when deciding to bring the case to court.[5] Given the amount of evidence in the *Spicknall* trial, Patterson would not have to prove Spicknall's guilt. The evidence would speak for itself. Patterson built his case on the defendant's written confession, the most reliable source of guilt. He also used the testimony of the distraught mother of the children and former wife of the defendant, Lisa Spicknall, who would speak on behalf the victims. Patterson would later introduce the testimony of the police officers who first arrived at the disturbing crime scene and tried

to save the life of Destiny Spicknall, who was still alive in her car seat. Other critical evidence included the detailed pictures of the crime scene and autopsies of the children, which illustrated the serious nature of the crime. Considering all of the available evidence against the defendant in this case, Patterson had good reason to prosecute Spicknall and expect to receive a conviction.

The prosecutor's power of discretion has a tremendous impact on the role of the defense and the fate of the defendant.[6] If the accused's guilt and the quality of evidence do not amount to a substantial case against the defendant, then the prosecutor can decide simply to dismiss the case and not bring the defendant to court at all, since "the prosecutor is given final authority for the decision [to initiate criminal prosecution]."[7] In the *Spicknall* case, if Patterson had decided that there really was not enough evidence to prove guilt and thereby dismissed the case, there would have been no trial. Richard Spicknall II would serve no jail time or fear the death penalty. He would live as a free man for the murder of his own two children. The defendant and his attorneys are largely at the will of the prosecutorial discretion.

Based on the circumstances of the crime, the prosecutor has discretion as to what specific formal charges to bring against the defendant. He has the "legal authority to determine the specific offense for which a person is to be prosecuted" and the "legal authority to drop criminal charges."[8] The prosecutor determines how to charge the defendant based upon the seriousness of the offense, which is "measured by the degree of injury and the instrument used to inflict the injury."[9] When bringing charges against Richard Spicknall, Patterson decided to charge the defendant with two counts of first-degree murder as well as two additional weapons charges. Since Spicknall's crime had been one of the most serious offenses in the recent history of Maryland, Patterson believed that the defendant must face the most severe charges.

Along with charging decisions, the prosecutor exercises discretion when making sentencing recommendations to the judge or jury based on the seriousness of the crime. Although the judge or jury theoretically decides the sentence, "in practice, the prosecutor is the most important institutional determinant of a criminal sentence."[10] The prosecutor has such a great influence because he prepares a pre-sentence report covering the "defendant's personal and social background, his criminal record, if any, and his mental and physical condition."[11] From Patterson's point of view, Richard Spicknall II was deserving of a death penalty recommendation. The murder of two children at gunpoint, was a shocking crime. Since Patterson decided to charge Spicknall with *two* counts of murder, he could seek the death penalty for defendants accused of a double murder under Maryland law.[12]

The death penalty recommendation in the *Spicknall* case was also a result of the vengeful attitude of the community. The idea of a father murdering his two young children sent people into a state of shock. Since the day the crime took place, the *Spicknall* case was highly publicized by local television and newspaper media due to its disturbing nature, and the entire community demanded retribution for the killing of the children. State's Attorney Patterson, an elected official, faced the political pressures of carrying out the will of his constituents by seeking the most just punishment for the defendant. In *Maryland v. Spicknall*, Patterson and the community believed that justice would best be served by ending Spicknall's life.

The prosecutor's formal charges and his sentencing recommendations have a direct impact on the strategy of the defense team and, ultimately, the outcome of the trial. No matter what the severity of the charges and sentencing decided upon by the prosecutor, the defense will always ask for charge and sentence reductions to seek the best interests of its client.[13] However, in the *Spicknall* case, there was much

more at stake for the defense when their client was charged with two counts of first-degree murder and had the possibility of receiving the death penalty. With Patterson's decision to seek capital punishment, the trial had become a matter of life and death. To combat the severe charges, the defense strategy revolved around proving that Spicknall was not criminally responsible for the murders (Maryland's answer to the insanity plea), thereby acquitting him of the crime. When that strategy failed, the defense was forced to negotiate according to Patterson's terms. As demonstrated by the *Spicknall* case, the prosecutor shapes the outcome of the trial by influencing the defendant to plead guilty in order to avoid the prosecutor's heavy charges and sentence recommendation.

Like the prosecutor, the judge also has the discretion to make crucial decisions that influence the fate of the defendant and the outcome of the trial. While the prosecutor's decisions are made to benefit the State, the judge must make his decisions based on his impartiality and his duty to uphold the rule of law. "The most commonly recognized role of the trial judge is to be the umpire in disputes under the American system."[14] Like an umpire, the judge, without taking sides, is there to ensure that the game is played fairly according to the established rules. However, he has the ultimate discretion to decide how those rules apply to the disputes in his courtroom. In *Maryland v. Spicknall*, the prudent discretion of Kent County Circuit Court Judge Price ensured that the defendant was given a fair trial by determining what external factors could potentially create bias in his courtroom and what evidence was admissible. Like the prosecutor, Judge Price's rulings on these matters would impact the defense team and its strategy.

The judge must use his discretion to determine when the atmosphere surrounding the courtroom is hindering the defendant's right to a fair trial. With his responsibility to keep order, the judge must try to

prevent "prejudice, passion, excitement, and tyrannical power" from turning the courtroom into an inquisition filled with bias and injustice.[15] While keeping the media at bay, the judge must guarantee the defendant a fair trial by ensuring that none of the prospective jury members have any prejudice prior to the trial proceedings, since "due process requires that the accused receive a trial by an impartial jury free from outside influences."[16] Because the media attention in the early stages of the *Spicknall* case had tainted potential jury members in Talbot County, the first presiding judge granted the defense a "change of venue." However, once the trial was moved to Chestertown, Judge Price still had a great responsibility for keeping the trial as fair as possible. Furthermore, since the first judge could not prevent external factors from affecting the case, Judge Price had an even greater task of making sure those same factors did not contaminate *his* courtroom.

Judicial discretion is essential for determining when the freedom of the press interferes with the defendant's right to a fair trial.[17] In the *Spicknall* case, Judge Price believed that the extensive media coverage would hinder the defendant's right to due process if safety measures were not taken. During the first day of jury selection, the judge openly warned reporters that they should only cover the case to a minimum so that they would not influence local citizens who might be selected as jury members. A few days after that statement, Judge Price publicly admonished the crowd of courtroom reporters, from Kent County and Baltimore alike, for exploiting the details of the case and potentially prejudicing the case. He believed that the news reporters, despite their First Amendment rights, were infringing on his own constitutional obligation to uphold justice and order by granting the defendant an unbiased trial.

In addition to seeking to thwart media exploitation of the case, other measures were taken by Judge Price to keep the trial as private

and fair as possible. The clerk's office, under the strict orders of Judge Price, refused to give out any information regarding the scheduling of the trial, the witnesses, or any details about the jury selection process due to the sensitive nature of the case. All of the *voir dire* questions distributed to the one hundred and sixty potential jurors and used during the jury selection process were to be collected and destroyed so that they would not leak out to the public. During the course of the trial, the courtroom was surrounded by security, with numerous police officers standing guard, as well as deputies performing bag inspection and metal detector checks. In addition, the judge ruled that while Lisa Spicknall and her family could be present in the courtroom for proceedings, they could not wear any pictures of her children, the victims, nor act in any manner that would unfairly influence the jury. By keeping external factors from contaminating the courtroom, the judge used his discretion to uphold the defendant's right of due process and to ensure a fair outcome of the trial based solely on the facts and circumstances of the case.

Similar to prosecutorial discretion, the decisions made by the judge also have a great impact on the defendant and his situation in the trial. As seen in the *Spicknall* case, the judge's decisions aimed at keeping the trial as private and just as possible were favorable decisions to the defendant. The less media attention given to Spicknall and his alleged crime, the better chance Spicknall had of receiving a fair trial by an unbiased jury. Furthermore, keeping trial proceedings secret and heavily securing the courtroom would also help protect the personal security of the defendant, who received several death threats throughout the course of the trial.[18] However, the judge could have made other more favorable decisions for the defendant, yet decided against them. In addition to rejecting the motion for a second change of venue, the judge also denied the defense's motion for a sequestered jury. Even though it

would help protect the jurors from outside influences, Judge Price believed that it was unfair to sequester the jurors without giving them prior notice. This decision was a "loss" for the defense team. In the small community of Chestertown, where word spread quickly and everybody knew each other, the jury members could not possibly avoid being influenced about the trial. While the judge was seeking to guarantee the defendant the fairest trial possible, his discretion did not always coincide with the defense's view of a "fair trial."

Although the judge plays a major role in keeping external pressures from tainting the atmosphere of the courtroom, he also exercises his discretion with regard to which evidence is admissible in court during a jury trial. "The judge makes rulings, based on the law, about which evidence can be presented to the jury and which may not be."[19] Thus, the judge must carefully examine the evidence and determine if it can be presented during the trial. In the *Spicknall* trial, the defense sought to exclude Spicknall's confession to police. Their client had allegedly hit his head while jumping into the Choptank River after committing the murders, thereby making him incapable of "sound judgment." Judge Price flatly denied the motion. He ruled that the defendant's confession was given voluntarily by Spicknall and, based on his mental and physical condition at the time, he was capable of sound judgment. Failing to get Spicknall's confession excluded, the defense moved to exclude vivid color photographs of the crime scene and autopsies of the children. Defense attorney Kathryn Flynn argued that the photos "were prejudicial, had no probative value, and would only be used to inflame the jury." In response, the prosecution pointed out that the pictures "humanized" the victims and were necessary for proving the serious nature of the crime. The decision rested in the hands of Judge Price. He ruled that "the probative nature of the photos outweighed the inflammatory nature of the photos." Judge Price determined that

black and white photos of the children, being less inflammatory to the jury, were admissible while other vivid color photos were excluded from the evidence. Through these decisions about what evidence was admissible and what wasn't, the judge's discretionary power shaped the trial.

The judge's decisions, of course, also affected the trial's outcome. Ruling the use of a crucial piece of evidence unconstitutional could make a conviction impossible, even when there was little actual doubt of the defendant's actions. In the *Spicknall* case, the judge's decisions would have been crucial to a jury verdict and, ultimately, the life of Richard Spicknall II. The defense team's initial strategy had depended on invalidating critical elements of the State's evidence. Because Judge Price disagreed, finding no reasonable grounds to dismiss the damning evidence of the confession and the photographs, the defense no longer believed it could establish that its client was not criminally responsible. Judicial discretion forced the defense to plea-bargain in order to avoid the death penalty at all costs. There was too much at stake for the defense to continue on with the trial after the judge validated the evidence of the prosecution.

The effectiveness of the American criminal justice system hinges on the discretion of prosecutor and judge. As seen in the *Spicknall* trial, those key decisions greatly influence the results of the trial and thereby define the American ideal of "justice." When Richard Spicknall II jumped into the Choptank River after murdering his own children, he did not realize that his own life would soon be carried along by the inescapable currents of justice. In the United States, that justice runs its course by the direction of prosecutorial and judicial discretion.

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Blue Night #2

It is too cold for the window open. My hands
jut from bell sleeves, clamp to the steering
wheel. At home you crack your window
open. Boxed in blankets, look to a yellow
light, a yellow field. We watched together –
ghost lines of fingers on closed glass.

Two times the trees roll outwards, heaving
swells of orange, veined red. Both places
it is the hovering moment before night.
Snow is a low ringing on my windshield,
sifts through the open window to your bed.

Your hands press mine flat to cold
panes. The field is shaved. Coarse stubble,
belly laid bare to the knife. What hand
holds it? Mine smudge the glass. We ask,
we ask. We watch the field breath from your window.
Know the point where the blade will slip,
thread red behind. We turn away.

Night falls. Clotted, blue blinkered by storm.
The passing trees, the shadow leaves striking
upwards, a fan of snow on asphalt, the slim
haunches of deer sliding in and out of stillness.
And here too the shaved fields — packed
with the cool gauze of snow, wounds buried,
blood sopped, white lips threaded shut. Sewn silent.

How can we question? We have our dusk pavilion,
our cocktails of swallowtails and wood lark, umber
dresses, scarlet dragonfly pinning thick coils of hair.

It is still snowing. Still
it is snowing. Cry
Hosanna, darling.
Praise,
Praise be to God.

SARAH BLACKMAN

When I Found Pluto

Might not be a planet after all, only a comet— of all things, a comet
Lost its tail!, I: shredded the newspaper strip and rip, bunched
It in a ball, threw it out the window, a systemless sphere.
I watched with fierce hopes, mad hopes that it wouldn't

Fall but float in elliptical orbit round my sill like
Charon, the only moon to choose a comet— of all
Things, a comet lost its tail!— to love. It fell,

Though, down and down, and I
Am forced to admit: there may

Be only eight after all.

JENNIFER REEDER

Three Tricks: What Code Really Is

CHRIS KLIMAS

How many languages can you speak? If you're a typical American, you probably know two languages, perhaps plus or minus one. Americans don't feel a great imperative to learn other people's languages. I guess partly this is because most of the United States is relatively isolated geographically—Canada and Mexico, after all, are the only countries that adjoin it, and most of Canada speaks English anyway—and also because the U.S., along with the British empire, has managed to inflict English on nearly everyone else. If you come from somewhere other than the United States, you might speak more than two. But probably not as many as I do.

I know nine languages.

The first trick is that their names are English, BASIC, Logo, Pascal, HyperTalk, JavaScript, Java, C++, and Perl. I'm not including the French I took in high school, because though I can read it well enough, I couldn't hold a conversation in French to save my life.

The second trick is that excluding English, these aren't languages that humans use to speak to other humans. (I hope.) They're what could be considered artificial languages; they were designed by humans to communicate with computers. They're artificial because they are extremely limited in their scope, and because the rules that govern what can be said in each of these languages are completely rigid.

A linguist named Noam Chomsky tried to create a formal grammar for the languages we speak. It was sort of like trying to work out the rules of Monopoly by watching people play for hours, only five hundred thousand times harder, because he wanted to find rules that would apply to every language humans ever spoke. He wasn't completely successful, but he did come up with a bunch of interesting ideas. Among

them is the idea that there is a hierarchy of languages: the simplest languages can be described with finite-state grammars, then phrase-structure grammars, and the most complex, transformational grammars.

Finite-state languages can be visualized as words traveling through a maze towards an exit. There are very limited choices—in most examples of finite-state grammars, there are at most three or four ways to go from any other word. Consider, as a contrast, the number of words that can follow a word as rare as "hippopotamus" in English. Finite-state grammars are too strict to be used even for computer languages, but you've probably used them all of the time without knowing it. If you've ever used the find feature in a word processor or web browser, you've constructed a finite-state language.

Consider a computer looking for the phrase "Canada speaks English" in this essay. Computers don't look for words in a document in exactly the same way that we do. Essentially, a computer tries to use the words of this essay to traverse a maze, which, in this case, is a straight line. The line has three points, each with a word connecting them. To enter the maze will require the word "Canada"; to proceed to the second point in the maze requires "speaks"; and to leave requires the word "English." That's why it's called a finite-state language; there are a limited number of points in the maze. Any other words will move the computer back to the beginning of the maze. Once the computer reaches the end of the maze, it has found our phrase. Note that if we were trying to search for any three-word phrase beginning with "Canada," then the maze would have several branches. But since we're only looking for a single phrase, there is only one correct path.

So the computer begins with the word "How," up in the first paragraph. There's no path for that word in the maze, so the computer stays outside the maze. It goes through each word until it hits the "Canada"

in the third sentence, and then moves inside the maze. To get any further, the word "speaks" needs to be next, but it isn't. The computer finds the word "and," which again drops it outside the maze again. Finally, the computer hits the phrase we're looking for later in the sentence, moving from "Canada" to "speaks" to "English," and then exiting the maze. It's found a phrase that's in the language we asked for.

This is a very simple language. It only has one phrase in it. But there is some flexibility in finite-state languages. For example, the language that contains any word that ends in "gry," whether it is a real English word or a made-up one, is a finite-state language. But finite-state grammars aren't flexible enough to describe computer languages. They're best suited to describing extremely small, rigid languages—languages that exclude more words than they include.

Instead, computer languages are a particular flavor of phrase-structure language called context-free. Essentially, that means that a word can be understood completely on its own. The word "pen" in a context-free language can mean only one thing. It can be something you write with or something you keep pigs in, but not both, because then you'd have to look at the rest of the sentence to understand which it means. Though parsing a sentence this way sounds like a simple enough proposition, it's actually very difficult to do mechanically.

Sentences in English—and in every natural language—are very flexible. If you say, "Molly and me went to the store today," you are grammatically incorrect, but people will understand you. If you feel the need to make up new words to communicate, you can do so as long as the words are understandable in context. If you want to leave out parts of your sentence because they feel redundant, you can go right ahead. The subject of the sentence "Hand me the pen" is implied. More completely, the sentence is "I would like you to hand me the pen." But

everybody knows what you mean.

Grammatically correct sentences in English can also be ambiguous, too. You can create a logical impossibility just by saying "This sentence is false." And the sentence "The girl touches the boy with the flower" has two possible meanings. It can either describe a girl touching a boy who happens to be holding a flower, or a girl using a flower to touch a boy. And let's not even start with "I love you."

For the most part, ambiguity and flexibility are a good thing when it comes to natural languages. I think that's because nobody knows anything for sure. If our language demanded certainty, we'd be too afraid of being wrong to say anything. And flexibility means that we can expand our language to encompass things that have just been discovered or invented. It also means that poetry can exist.

And flexibility lets all of us make poetry in our everyday speech, simply by speaking the way we do. Everybody has little idioms of language that make us individuals. I say, "It'll only take point-two seconds" instead of "It'll only take a little time"; I say, "expensive times three" instead of saying "very expensive." Idioms are also a kind of gift to pass around; one of my close friends sometimes says "point-two seconds," too, and I picked up "Qué hora es?" from another friend as a non-sequitur way of saying "I have taken you to school" — which, of course, is another way of saying "I have defeated you soundly."

But flexibility and ambiguity don't work well in the realm of computers. Firstly, because computers are as black and white as you can get. Computers, since they're built around extremely tiny electrical switches, are all yes and no. When a computer asks you "Do you want to save your file?", there's no button labeled "Maybe." Though it would certainly make life interesting, wouldn't it?

The other reason why flexibility and ambiguity aren't such hot ideas

when it comes to computers is that computers are often used in critical situations. Most of the time, if you speak confusing sentences, you don't die. But you shouldn't give ambiguous directions to a computer keeping track of lots of money or someone's life.

Since English isn't an optimal choice for telling computers what to do, programmers had to invent new languages, the most important of which is the one that the computer itself is born with. The chip that does all of the work of the computer, called the processor, speaks an extremely limited language. On the surface, it accepts an incomprehensible series of numbers as instructions. The number 13, for example, might tell the processor to add one thing to another. The number 2 might tell it to do nothing at all.

These numbers are pretty difficult to remember. We humans speak with letters, not numbers, so computer designers created little codes that corresponded to each operation. They started off as three-letter codes (called mnemonics, in the designers' hope that they would somehow help people remember what they did); ADD for add, and NOP for do nothing (literally, "No OPeration"). There is a whole host of operations available, and nearly all of them are important. There's JMP, that jumps to a set of instructions stored elsewhere in the computer, and LDA, which loaded a special place in the computer called the accumulator (LDA stands for "LoaD Accumulator") with a given value, so that it could be added to or subtracted from later on.

If this seems a bit arcane, that's because it is. This language is called machine language, and as such, is obsessed with the physical details of a computer's operation. To make sentences in machine language successfully, you have to have an intimate relationship with hexadecimal notation (that is, what the value of the number 4E00 means), the structure of a computer's memory (you're not allowed to store information

just anywhere), and all manner of other technical details.

This was not an easy task. But if you knew all of these things, you could stand proud. Not only were you a certified genius, but your programs ran blindingly fast and took up very little disk space.

Speed and size are two-thirds of the trinity of computer science — the other (unfortunately, more neglected) part being correctness. Processors in the heyday of machine language were colossally slow compared to the ones we use today. The recent G4 series of processors, for example, can complete an operation in less time than it takes light to travel from your monitor to your eyes. They aren't even the fastest processors around, either. Early processors were fast, but not even close to beating the light hitting your eyes. It was up to programmers to squeeze as much out of the processor as possible. Disks in the early days held an astonishingly small amount of information compared to the hard disks of today, so smaller programs were better.

But machine language is hard to write in, and even more difficult to fix programs in. People found out that readability—that is, how easy it is to look at a program you hadn't written and understand what it was meant to do—was pretty important, and so they invented languages that weren't as close to the computer's workings, but made writing sentences easier. They also invented compilers, which are programs that translated the sentences of their new, easier languages into machine language.

The trick—which is the third one of this essay—is that it's hard to define what easier is. People get into fights every day over which computer language is best. Perhaps it's only a sign of how obsessive computer programmers can be, but I think it also indicates that people have incredibly different ways of expressing themselves. Even when faced with a task as limited as giving instructions to a computer, people

come up with a nearly infinite number of ways of doing it. A Babel of computer languages has erupted, and will continue to as long as computers continue to exist.

I think it's interesting to look at the directions in which things have developed, because one of the great lessons that computer languages have taught me is that when it comes time to learn a new language, you learn a new mindset. Some languages are built upon the remains of older ones, but when a designer creates a new language, she does so with a completely unique perspective on how to tell a computer how to solve a problem. So when someone picks up a new language, it takes some time to adjust to that mindset.

Trying to cram English into French is a futile enterprise, and might even cause some French people to threaten you with bodily harm. To really speak a language, you have to immerse yourself in its mode of thought, its worldview. It may not be one you personally believe in, but you become a broader-minded person because of it.

The first computer language I learned was, appropriately enough, named BASIC. It came built-in with the Apple II that my parents bought when I was around ten years old, I think. Here's how you count to 10 in BASIC:

```
10 PRINT "I CAN COUNT TO 10. WATCH:"
20 LET X = 1
30 PRINT X
40 LET X = X + 1
50 IF X <= 10 THEN GOTO 30
60 END
```

BASIC is, well, basic. First of all, everything's in uppercase because when BASIC was invented, computers were limited to using only uppercase characters. This was because people had bigger problems to

worry about than making computers conversational. It was a minor miracle that everything worked. Another notable feature is that each line has a number in front of it, which indicates the order of the steps. Line 10 comes before line 20, and so on. The numbering goes in tens because it left room in case you'd made a mistake and wanted to have the computer do something between lines 40 and 50. If that happened, you could write line 45.

The actual syntax of the language is fairly close to English. The PRINT command writes something on the screen, whether it's a bunch of words in line 10, or a variable, like line 30. (A variable's just a place to store information; you could store the number of meals you've eaten today in a variable named MEALS, for example.) The LET command stores numbers or words in a variable; it's sort of reminiscent of algebra word problems.

Line 50, though, is an example of what set off one of the most famous holy wars in computer science. All of it is over that word GOTO. GOTO is a way to change the flow of a program; if the program hasn't finished counting (incidentally, < and = smooshed together is an awkward way of writing "less than or equal to"), it goes back to line 30 instead of line 60, where the program ends. Simple enough, don't you think?

The problem is that when you start throwing GOTOs all over the place, a program becomes very hard to read. It also can become very disorganized, because instead of carefully designing a program's structure, a programmer can tape up its holes with GOTOs. Many of the leading programmers of the day began to eschew GOTOs entirely, because by that point, better methods had arrived. Edsger Dijsktra, a pretty famous guy in the field, wrote an article in 1968 for the *Communications of the ACM* entitled "Goto considered harmful," which set off a huge controversy that never really has gone away. Another article ap-

peared soon afterwards, entitled "'Goto considered harmful' considered harmful" (which is a good example of programmer wit, I guess) that made a solid case for the continued life of GOTO.

Nowadays, GOTOs are still used, though they're just plain old gotos. Generally speaking, they're used when something catastrophic has happened—when the printer's jammed or the hard disk is broken—and the program needs to quickly, gracefully exit.

Pascal, the next language I learned, is very different from BASIC. It was meant to teach programmers discipline and organization in writing programs. As languages go, it's pretty formal. It took me a while to figure it out, just because—well, because it looks so different. It thinks so differently. Here's how to count to 10 in Pascal:

```
program Count (output);
const
        highestNumber = 10;
var
        x: integer;

begin
writeln('I can count to ', highestCount, '. Watch:');
x := 1;
while (x <= highestNumber) do
        begin
        writeln(x);
        x := x + 1;
        end;
end.
```

Writing a Pascal program, in many ways, is like following a recipe. Everything has an order to it. First of all, you have to declare that you're writing a program. I decided to call it Count. Then you have to declare whether it prints anything out (or, in engineering terminology, output)

or asks any questions of the user (input). If the program reads any files or saves any files, you have to declare them up top, too.

Then come the constants. They let you define a certain value as having a name; here, I gave the name highest number to 10, the number we're counting to. There are two advantages to using names instead of numbers. First, the program becomes more readable; instead of having a value, you have a name that tells you what its purpose is. Secondly, if you want to change that value—to have the program count to 100, for example—you just change the definition once, in its easy-to-find location. In a very complicated program, changing values is difficult, because it's hard to remember all of the places where you used them.

Then come the variables. You have to say explicitly what kind of value each variable represents; it could be a whole number, a decimal number, a single letter, or even a line of text. But you're not allowed to change what type of variable they are in the middle of the program. This seems simple, but it also gave rise to a holy war of smaller proportions. The reason why everyone got peeved about it was that if you divide a whole number like 7 by 2, you get 3. But that's not even remotely right. It ought to be 3.5. But Pascal is very strict about not turning whole numbers into decimal numbers — which seems kind of ridiculous, doesn't it? A lot of people thought so. I'll explain what happened in a minute.

I've written a while loop here instead of the GOTO I used in the BASIC program, because one of Pascal's major aims was to eliminate GOTOs. The basic meaning behind the while loop is "while x is less than or equal to the highest number we're counting to, do this next step." It's easy to understand how many times we'll go through the loop, and why we'll stop. A GOTO is much more ambiguous.

Incidentally, there are no line numbers in Pascal, and nearly every

language that succeeded BASIC, for that matter. Part of the reason why is that Pascal is so anti-GOTO, but it's also because a single statement can continue across many lines. The words begin and end push statements into a single, large statement. The steps of the while loop are put into one pile, and the whole program itself is lumped between a begin and end statement. Although I don't like Pascal much anymore, the finality of that "end." is still striking.

Anyway, Pascal programs are much more readable than BASIC programs. Because the language demands so much structure from a program, it forces the programmer to state things carefully, to not take shortcuts. There are many who think that there are too many restrictions, that they get in the way of writing an efficient program. They call Pascal and its ilk bondage-and-discipline languages. Java, though looser than Pascal, falls into the same category.

Their school came up with a language called C, which later became C++. Here's a C++ version of the count-to-ten program:

```
#include <iostream>

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
        {
        const int highestNumber = 10;
        cout << "I can count to " << highestNumber <<
        ". Watch:" << endl;
        for (int x = 1; x <= highestNumber; x++)
                cout << x << endl;
        return 0;
        };
```

You can sort of see the Pascal in there, but it's pretty muddied. The ironic thing is that to me, this is more like English than the Pascal program. That's because C and C++ were designed to make writing programs easier for the programmer. A good example is that phrase x++ in the for loop. It turns out programmers do a lot of adding one to

a variable, so instead of writing x = x + 1, C++ lets you just write x++. Of course, things got hairier as more conveniences were added. x += 3 is the equivalent of adding 3 to x. x *= 2 multiplies x by two. x += (x > 0) ? 1 : 0 means that if x is a positive number, 1 should be added to it.

In other words, C++ is very idiomatic. Although it can be written as a formal set of rules like Pascal, its origin is the thirty-some years that people have been programming. Experience, not eloquence, is its source. It evolved in reaction to the needs of its programmers, not by a formal design process. There have been formal rules set down for good C++, but these have been mainly after-the-fact.

That's why C++ programs always begin a function labeled main. That's why C++ programs return 0 at the end. Not because it makes some kind of logical sense—although there is some sense to it, of course—but because of tradition. Once you're inside the programming culture, it seems logical. If you're outside, tough luck.

Perl, the most recent language I've learned, takes C++'s desire to meet experienced programmers' needs to the next level. It was designed by a professional linguist who also happened to be a computer programmer. Its purpose, among others, is to accomplish tasks that can be stated easily in English but become overly complicated in other languages. It's a down and dirty kind of language. Screw counting to 10. Perl isn't called the Swiss Army chainsaw of programming languages for nothing. Here's how to change this essay so that every language besides Perl is now referred to as "some other language":

```
#!/usr/bin/perl
open ESSAY, "language.txt" or die "Couldn't open essay.";
while (<ESSAY>)
        {
        print s/
English|BASIC|Logo|Pascal|HyperTalk|JavaScript|Java|C\+\+
        /some other language/g;
        };
close ESSAY;
```

First of all, there are no declarations whatsoever here. This program uses two variables, but they're hidden. The first is the file ESSAY. The second is a variable named, believe it or not, _. (It's called $_, really, but that's because dollar signs precede variables in Perl. The reason why is tied up in programming tradition.)

But there are no underscores in the program! That's because Perl strives very hard to be like English. You can leave a lot of your program implicit. Let me explain what happens in this program. First, we open up the essay file. If for some reason that doesn't work, then the program stops with an appropriate message.

The first time I saw the do-this-or-die construction that's in the second line, I couldn't believe that you could actually say things like that. How could a statement like that be made into a formal set of rules? It's because the designer of Perl made the rules flexible enough that they aren't exactly rules anymore. You can definitely write an incorrect sentence in Perl, but there are about five thousand versions of the same correct sentence. One of Perl's maxims is that There's More Than One Way To Do It, and Perl takes its maxims very seriously. (The other notorious maxim is that the three virtues of computer programmers are laziness, impatience, and hubris.) It accommodates all kinds of people, from those who've just started programming to those who've been programming for the last ten years. People who've only ever used BASIC or diehard C++ hackers. Everybody can write in their own idiom.

The program then reads each line from the original essay (when you put angle brackets around a file, it means "read the next line from this file") and, using a finite-state grammar, makes the changes. The line with all the languages stuck in between strange symbols is a compressed way of describing the kind of maze that I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. (It's called a regular expression by Perl pro-

grammers, and leaning-toothpick syndrome by Perl's critics.) Basically, the line says, "replace all of the names of the other languages with the phrase some other language." It then writes the changed line to the screen.

So where's the underscore? I left it out, just like you leave out "I would like you to" from "Hand me the pen." Here's a more verbose version of the while loop:

```
while ($_ = <ESSAY>)
        {
        $_~=s/
English|BASIC|Logo|Pascal|HyperTalk|JavaScript|Java|C\+\+
        /some other language/g;
        print $_;
        };
```

Makes things look more confusing, doesn't it? The program doesn't have to be written this way because the underscore variable has a special property. Whenever a value doesn't have anywhere to go—when I wrote while (<ESSAY>), the line I read didn't have anywhere to go — it goes into $_. Whenever you leave something out, it's assumed you meant to write $_. So you can write programs that make sense in a pseudo-English way without getting tied up with formality.

There's a down side to it, of course. You can get so stingy with your code that people looking at it may wonder where your program went. Perl's critics are fond of calling it a write-only language. That is, you can write a program that works, but you have no idea why, because your programs begin to resemble a pile of random letters.

But that's only true if you write in a messy style. Perl's like English in that you can be as verbose as you'd like. It's all a matter of personal preference. In this respect, Perl is the anti-Pascal. Instead of crystalliz-

ing your thought into an extremely formal language, you can write things the way you'd like. But you also have to face the consequences of your style. The actual process of writing a program is simple compared to the work of maintaing a program. If you haven't written good code, tracking down and fixing mistakes—not to mention making changes and improvements that users ask for—can be a hellish experience. But that freedom of expression is central to Perl. Instead of working hard to speak a foreign language, you can write something that melds the rigor of computer language with the expressiveness of English.

You can even write poetry in Perl. Perl poetry doesn't do anything functional—but then, poetry never was supposed to. But it makes me hopeful that someday writing poetry and writing code may not be so far apart. Poets and programmers are closer in their methods of composition than most people suspect (both have a tendency to work late at night and, of course, alone), but there is a difference in thought between expressing the hidden parts of yourself and expressing the most elegant solution to a problem. Perhaps the division won't be as definite sometime soon. Perhaps our invented languages will become as rich as the ones that we use to tell each other our deepest secrets.

Human Adaptability to Space

JUSTIN ARMETTA

Human biological nature has evolved over millions of years on the surface of the Earth. Gravity has shaped our bones and muscles. An oxygen-rich atmosphere has nourished our bodies and shielded us from harmful radiation. Our psychological cycles of sleep, heartbeat, and aging have reflected the rhythm of earthly time.[1] In the last hundred years scientific achievements have allowed us to leave this surface environment and travel into space. Airplanes carrying people to the upper reaches of the atmosphere are a common means of transportation. Astronauts in the Apollo spacecraft have traveled to the moon and back. Today, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is building the International Space Station with Russia and other European countries. This will allow humans in space to orbit the Earth for months at a time. In the planning stage, there is a more aggressive and high risk three-year manned trip to the planet Mars.[2] This trip will test human adaptability to space.

Scientific concern is high over human ability to go to such extremes. In the three-day 1972 Apollo mission, astronaut Eugene Cernan, fatigued and filthy with rock dust on the moon, barely made it back to the spacecraft for a return to Earth. A trip to Mars will multiply the hazards of space travel. Scientist Michael Long suggests a troubling scenario.[3] He says, "Imagine a radiation-sick, sleep-deprived astronaut stepping onto Mars. Challenged by a different gravity and with his bones, muscles, and immune system weakened by the long trip; he falls and breaks his leg. How would NASA respond?" Today NASA is concentrating on known environmental problems in space and experimenting to find methods to solve them. These issues range from physi-

cal problems of weightlessness and radiation, to psychological problems of isolation, sleep deprivation, disorientation, depression, and time changes.[4] These problems are serious and affect many parts of the human body. For these reasons, only the major ones will be examined.

Weightlessness

Weightlessness is a constant problem in space but hard to simulate on Earth. In a cosmonaut training center in Moscow, there is a special airplane that flies astronauts in maneuvers simulating weightlessness. This helps astronauts prepare for adaptation to the zero-gravity conditions of space. During zero-gravity periods, people bounce off the ceiling, do airborne gymnastics, and are thrilled by the sensation of weightlessness. Others are not amused, but sick. This free motion causes many to be nauseous. Motion sickness affects two-thirds of all astronauts.[5] Though most recover after a few days in space, longer exposure severely stresses and significantly changes body systems.

The weightless problem is better appreciated by examining its physiological effects. Deprived of gravity information, the human brain is confused by visual illusions. Body fluids rush to the head and chest while neck veins bulge. Faces puff as the heart and other internal organs enlarge. Sensing too much fluid, the body begins to discharge it. This includes electrolytes, calcium, and blood plasma. The production of red blood cells decreases, rendering astronauts slightly anemic.[6] With the loss of fluid, legs shrink. Spinal discs expand and so does the astronaut. A six-foot man can soon measure six-foot-two and suffer a backache.

Though this sounds terrible, in an outstanding feat of adaptation, most astronauts adjust to weightlessness and even come to enjoy it. They learn to control their movements and their senses regain balance[7]. Through a process of biofeedback, many adverse reactions are

reduced in severity. After short trips in space lasting the span of only several weeks, astronauts quickly readjust to Earth's gravity and seem no worse for their experience in space.

During longer flights there is alarming evidence that weightlessness can cause permanent damage to the physiology of the human body. Russia's Institute for Biomedical Problems watched cosmonauts return from long space flights wobbly, pale, and unable to stand without fainting. Some needed to be carried from the spacecraft and had to spend time recuperating in the hospital.[8] Americans returning from flights of several months duration also paid a price. They suffered from loss of weight, bone size, and density. NASA is especially concerned about flights lasting a year or more. During long durations, the heart loses muscle mass, while the large, weight-bearing muscles of the legs gradually atrophy. Density in the bones of the pelvis and legs decreases relentlessly. This decrease is one to two percent a month on average. Severe osteoporosis could result. Doctors believe that a process begins with atrophy of large weight-bearing muscles. These weakened muscles exert less torsion and compression on bones, initiating a little-understood process that drastically reduces bone renewal.

The obvious countermeasure seems to be exercise that keeps muscles fit. The Russians have established rigorous schedules of bungee stretching, followed by sessions on bicycles and treadmills. Gymnastics will be required of astronauts in all space flights. The message is, "Do your exercises. Don't and we will have to carry you off the spacecraft."[9] Although the Russian exercise program is impressive, not one astronaut has returned from long-duration flight without bone loss. A few have lost as much as 20 percent of their hip density. NASA believes that we must find better ways to stop loss of bone and muscle before asking astronauts to walk on Mars. If astronauts cannot maintain at least 95 percent of density during the long trip, the risk of bone

fracture is too high to take. Unusual alternatives are being studied to preserve the bone structure of astronauts. One idea is to add drugs to their diet to prevent osteoporosis. Another is the use of a costly artificial gravity device that would provide short doses of gravity. The issue on the need for artificial gravity grows with respect to long duration flights in the future. Both Russia and the United States are debating this step. The problem here is that such a device would disrupt other systems of the spacecraft. Even more bizarre is the idea of vibrating astronauts. Scientists have discovered that by vibrating floors under turkeys and sheep they have increased the density of their bones.[10] So far, no men have volunteered to be vibrated.

A more detailed account of how humans' cardiovascular systems adjust to microgravity is interesting. In flight, the body no longer experiences the downward pull of gravity to distribute the blood and other fluids to the lower parts of the body, especially the legs. These fluids make what is called a "headward shift," meaning they are redistributed to the upper parts of the body. This causes the astronauts to have puffy faces and thinner legs, sometimes called "bird legs." The regulatory systems of the body sense this excess fluid and direct the kidneys to eliminate much of it by urination.[11] Thirst is adjusted so that intake of fluids is reduced. With decreased drinking and increased fluid elimination, the body's fluid level falls below its normal level on Earth. With less work, the heart shrinks in size in what doctors call the "space-normal" condition.

When returning to Earth's gravity, the human body senses that it does not have enough fluid to function properly and a reverse adjustment takes place. The heart enlarges and the body tissues retain more fluid. Normal pre-flight conditions return in two to three weeks. This shows an astronaut's amazing adaptability. It is clear that man's car-

diopulmonary system adjusts quickly to Earth and the presence of gravity once out of a weightless environment.[12]

Radiation

Radiation presents yet another array of problems to astronauts in space. Earthlings who enjoy the sun's benign warmth may find radiation explosions difficult to believe.[13] A coronal mass ejection discharges billions of tons of electrically charged gas into space. Colliding with Earth's magnetic field in March 1989, one such pulse shorted out power in large areas of North America like a power surge from a lightning strike. These solar flares explode regularly with the force of a hundred million Hiroshima bombs. This could potentially launch harmful rays toward any spacecraft in the vicinity. Solar flares present a lethal threat because they deplete bone marrow and kill cells in vital organs. To alleviate this problem, NASA has developed a monitoring system to warn astronauts of such events. When flares occur, the crew is immediately notified. They will then scurry into the space equivalent of a storm cellar enclosed with heavy polyethylene shielding that will absorb the radiation.[14]

A more serious threat is the radiation from cosmic rays that travel from the Milky Way and other galaxies. They possess too much energy and too much speed for shielding to be effective. Heavy ions of iron forged in supernovae can travel 185,000 miles a second, nearly the speed of light. These are unavoidable. They pass through the body tissue, bombarding cells and leaving them unstable, mutated, or dead. Understanding the biological effects on astronauts is a major priority.[15] The long-term cancer risk is unknown.

Researchers studying this problem have bombarded rats with nonlethal doses of heavy iron particles. This caused significant reduction

of the brain chemical dopamine, which is necessary in motor ability, cognition, and memory. Remarkably, when they were fed a diet that included blueberry extract rich in antioxidents, the rats improved. Other researchers have found that tamoxifen, an anti-cancer drug, heals tumors in rats irradiated with heavy iron particles.[16] Human adaptation to cosmic rays will probably require special diets and drugs to offset their damage.

Psychological Problems

In addition to these physical problems, astronauts face a variety of psychological problems. NASA finds that the stresses of isolation and confinement are increased if people have too few tasks to perform. NASA psychiatrists worry about the mental health of astronauts, including depression.[17] The risk of depression remains high but it is difficult to identify. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania are searching for a quantitative means of recognizing stress and depression. They plan to build a computer program that can recognize emotional states. The computer will be taught to recognize facial expressions with human emotion (e.g., the slanted eyebrows of sadness or the wide eyes of surprise). Information is recorded in tiny pixels, enabling it to determine subtle changes in expression. Would astronauts consider such a computer program an invasion of privacy? It is probable.

Disorientation is a psychological problem that occurs in space because of the weightless environment. We have within the inner ear a balance mechanism called the vestibular organ. This organ senses our body's position and movement in relation to the Earth's gravity. Information from our senses of sight and touch and information from our muscles and joints, are integrated by the brain in order to understand the body's actions.[18] In space, without a gravitational foundation, the astronaut becomes confused. The brain adjusts in a day or two, learn-

ing to rely on visual observations. Placement of directional symbols will tell an astronaut the spacecraft's position in relation to the Earth. With orientation restored, astronauts can now function with comfort and confidence.

Space Time

As astronauts venture farther into the extremes of space, they must adjust to the enigma of time. This presents them with an obstacle not well understood. For two centuries, scientists were satisfied with Isaac Newton's definition. It established that time is absolute and flows unvarying without relation to any outside force.[19] In 1907, Albert Einstein shattered this understanding with his theory of relativity. It predicted that time was not just a constant measurement of events, but a limiting dimensional force in space. The implications of this phenomenon to space travel are wide ranging. A clock on board a space ship traveling 87 percent the speed of light would tick only half as fast as the same clock on the surface of the Earth.[20] Of course humans will need radically new propulsion systems to achieve such speed. Even today, at much slower speeds, some problems in space may be related to time change. For example, there is a problem of sleep deprivation. On early trips, it was attributed to noise, improper scheduling, and uncomfortable bed restraints. Even after these conditions were corrected, however, sleep patterns remain unchanged. Today, astronauts average only six hours sleep per day in space versus eight hours on Earth.[21] NASA does not know why. Within the brain, various biological clocks respond to the passage of time. These clocks, through an interconnecting of billions of neurons, regulate all our bodily functions.[22] There is little doubt that these most complicated mechanisms in the universe are tuned to Earth time. Scientists can only speculate what will happen when their atomic structures are subjected to a slower time in space travel.

There is some reason to be optimistic about our ability to travel at time-changing speeds. The human body has demonstrated its ability to adjust to the lack of gravity. It most likely has the same natural instinct to adjust to time changes. Consider the fact that slower time may have the effect of slowing our rate of biological metabolism. If the body's atomic structure adapts to time changes by slowing this rate down even more, astronauts may feel better and age more slowly. During a high speed, three-year trip in space-time, astronauts may age only two Earth years.

In Houston, astronauts are training for a trip to Mars. It is a trip that will test their physical and psychological adaptability to the frontiers of time and space. NASA is optimistic about the human ability to go to these extremes.

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Between The Ground And Sky

SARAH BLACKMAN

She hadn't been able to cry at the funeral. Not as she had wanted to, as Elise had with raw, jerking sobs that outlined the curve of her rib cage through her dress. Kitty cried the polite tears of a colleague and friend. The casket was open. A line of people, somber skin shrinking away from their somber clothing, bowed their heads and filed past. Walter was in front of her and when he moved away, the back of his neck looking red and plucked against his white shirt color, Kitty steeled herself for the mortician's clownish version of Philip, all rouge and hearty peach tones, the desperate sparkle of makeup against waxy skin. But it was him, his lips relaxed, lashes feathered against the olive dome of his cheekbone. His hands were crossed high up on his chest and his wedding band gleamed sullenly against his black suit. He looked like he was asleep.

"Jesus Philip, that's so cliched," she thought, swallowing an instinctual cocktail party laugh. She stumbled a little and gripped the lip of the coffin for support. "Oh my darling, look dead. Please. I want you to look dead."

Throughout the service—Elise's quietly hysterical eulogy, Philip's brother's chocked recitation of their childhood—all she could look at was the smeared arc her fingers had made against the high laquer of the coffin. She didn't hear the hymns, the organ's deep tones that echoed the dark wood of the pews and alter, the priest's reedy intonations which fluttered, already wounded, to the rafters where they died. When it came time to walk to the grave site with the rest of the assembly, Walter had to gently tug her to her feet and lead her out, one hand on her elbow. It was a clear winter day, cold and brilliant. The brittle sun

hardened the edges of the tombstones, sharpened the blades of the frost whitened grass. She had forgotten her sunglasses. "Stupid, stupid," as she rummaged through her purse.

Philip made friends gracefully. There were a lot of people there to comfort Elise, lean her into their shoulders, stroke her dark, grey-shot hair with a lingering sympathetic touch. She was accepting a hug from Oliver Arkins now, her thin arms crossed and startlingly pale against the back of his suit. Kitty and Philip had joked about Oliver. Oliver Twist they called him, because he was frail and tremulously pious. Because he taught 19th century literature and talked about Dickens at all the faculty parties. It was easy. It was stupid. A stupid joke.

There were lots of stupid jokes. She remembered a business trip they had taken. A conference on 'Folk Art in 17th Century Russia,' and they played hooky for a day. Philip, naked, clowning around, the lines of his body lost in the white rush of sun through the hotel window as he made his towel into a turban and pretended to tell her fortune. "I see a tall dark and handsome in your future. That will be 60 pieces of silver. No money? Ahh, no pockets. Well, maybe we can work out an alternate payment plan."

And later, slightly tipsy, smoking cigarettes in the bathtub with a soap dish for an ashtray, they made up limmericks about their friends and colleagues. "We're bathtub poets," Philip said, fanning his hands slowly under the water. Kitty giggled and flicked an inaccurate stem of ash at the plastic dish which bobbed wildly on Philip's waves. "A wife named Elise took the part/Of Victorian Lady to heart," Kitty thought, but she didn't say it or even finish the rhyme in her head. It was against the rules somehow to target spouses, broke the unvoiced agreement to leave those forms unfleshed, blanket clothed hulks for other beds, leaning presences in other doorways, against other walls. She slid deeper into the water, gripping Philip's shins with her toes, and blew a jet of smoke at his forehead. It wreathed him briefly and then faded into his

hair, into the stark tile of the walls and the hovering banks of steam.

They were lowering his coffin into the grave. The sun caught and flared on its brass railing in a liqued, blinding surge. Kitty looked away, blinked, looked back and caught one last glimpse of the bleary smear her fingertips had left behind. Then they were throwing dirt; she was hot inside her coat and Elise was sobbing hoarsely, being held up by strong and public arms. And they left. Got in the car and left.

"A good man, Philip." Walter says. "I'll miss him."

"Mmmm." The engine purrs through the console as Walter guides the sleek machine over the cemetery's drive. Gravel crunches mildly under the tires. A slight bump and they are out on the main road, the asphalt gleaming in a ribboned swath before them.

"I'll miss him," Walter says as they picked up speed and glide smoothly past the dark firs and open stubbled fields of the road side. Kitty watches the trees blur into each other. Their tops are lost, curving somewhere above the car, and Kitty feels how tall they are in their sentinel trunks, the impassive fringe of their needles. She presses her hand against the cold pane of the window. When she takes it away a ghost hand lingers, edged in the mist from her breath. Lingers, then fades and is gone.

Her daughters are all taller than her now. She remembers when taller meant better, bigger and older equaling automatic superiority. The cadence of the playground, jump-rope chants and the boy's raucous shouts from the grass field where they played war games disguised as soccer. The girls wore patterned ribbons in their hair—her favorite was one with blue whales swimming across a lighter background—and leaned against the brick wall of the school with their ankles daintily crossed, socks rolled over once. They leveled gazes filled with casual scorn at the littler kids who chased each other across the packed blacktop, mimicked their thin screeching laughter. If one fell, bursting the sun bubbles on the tar with the sudden friction of her

hands and knees, they would laugh out loud at her storm of shocked tears, effortlessly transmitting to one another their superiority, the inestimable worth in their healthy, growing frames. The same way they would sometimes all begin simultaneously running: aimless, giggling, fanning out like a flock of birds rising from a field.

It was this way with Lainey too, her sister, four years younger and more delicately boned. Her brittle nose and high, sweeping cheekbones flushing a light red in the sun as Kitty showed her how to swing from the dogwood branch like Tarzan, which flat stream rock to use as a pestle, pulping a summer thousand of gypsy moth caterpillars into thick green paste.

In the summer, when the heat rose to a sweltering buzz both in and outside of the house, she and Lainey would smuggle their mother's hand held fan into the crawl space on the second floor. They would lie there on their backs or bellies, the warm cedar air settling against their skin like a furred thing in the filtered light; and they would talk, fight sometimes, dare the other to stick the tip of her tongue in between the whirring plastic blades of the fan. Mostly they would talk, protected from the other's scrutiny by the dim light. Lainey, in the fourth grade now, might like Kyle Lowthrop, but didn't know if it was because of how she felt or because everyone said she did. Kitty had let Mike Kaproski kiss her and put his hand up under her shirt. Lainey stumbled on some older boys kicking a stray dog to death, its jaws coated with foam, gasping through the clots of blood that leaked from its nose and mouth. Kitty had heard their parents having sex through the wall one night, their soggy groans inescapable as she lay spread eagled and panting against the heat.

But now Lainey is a hundred cities away, her voice a dusty cinnamon over phone lines, and the memories are fading. Kitty does not even know what she has forgotten, just that there are holes, blank spaces. It scares her. "If I can't remember it may as well not have happened,"

she thinks, "It didn't happen. How would you know?"

When her own girls were young she could see Lainey in all three of them, and herself. And Walter. All those people shifting behind such compact faces. When they were infants she turned them towards the wall as they slept, stroked their spidery hair with her index finger and thought fiercely, "You be you. You grow up you, do you hear me?"

Now they were all taller than her, stronger, wiser in some ways. They had arrowed effortlessly past her and she watched them walk in and out of doors, open windows, lay dishes of food on tables, shove their shirt sleeves up over their elbows with unconscious impatience. Those infrequent times when they were all home together she felt like they formed the slim, straight sides to a triangle, and she wondered what her part in it was. One of the points at which they met? A bisecting line? The central core around which they rotated? But she knew. Knew from her own relationship with her sister, from watching her mother's loose lips pursed around a cigarette four days before she died. She was outside, watching. Walking over the blond, sun strewn boards of her floors while their shape, filled with the dark smoke of secrets, of sisters and of youth, rolled unevenly away.

* * *

It came out more quietly than Kitty had intended. "I'll make you some soup." Almost a whisper.

"For God's sake, Mom. Its a baby, not the flu."

They were in the kitchen, Erin facing her across the counter. Kitty was cleaning the stove, head bowed under Erin's heated gaze, picking at a dried bit of food with one coral pink thumbnail.

When Erin was eight she dipped the length of her long, mahogany ponytail in a bucket of Clorox bleach. Kitty walked into the kitchen in time to stop her from dunking her whole head, but it was too late to save the hair. She remembered Erin, hair melting in a slimy grey mass

down her back, stubbornly insisting that this was how the movie stars did it through her tears. She wasn't crying for her lost hair, or even because Kitty was angry. What Kitty saw in Erin's bunched, reddening face was a mixture of rage and fear. Rage that she had been stopped, contradicted in her assurance, and fear that spiraled out of Kitty's own panic, the naked edge to her voice that broke through the scolding words and said, hysterically, 'I love you.' Clinging to the girl's thin shoulders with fear damp palms, 'I love you. I love you. I love.'

It was the same kitchen, the same June sun lipping the window sills and paneled glass door, and Kitty was afraid again. She looked at the knuckle of her thumb as it bent and flexed against the stove top. There was a cut in one of the creases. She didn't remember getting it. A thin rust line, dried and unimportant.

"Mom, I can't have it. I mean, Dave and I are over and with two other kids...I don't have a *job*..."

She and Walter had laughed at it, leaning against each other, weak and weepy at the image of their dark girl, defiantly bald, standing in the litter of her own bleach burnt hair. But God had she been scared at the time. Running over again and again what could have happened if she had been a minute, two, too late. What bleach could have done to those eyes. The blind daughter, the maimed one.

That wasn't Erin. Erin already had her place. She was the wild child, the middle girl who got hurt—fell out of trees, chipped her front teeth, slid down ice sharded hills on her face trying to skate in their flooded back field. She was the stubborn one, wouldn't cry, wouldn't talk, silent in the face of Barbara's bookish loquaciousness and Suzanne's scatter-shot rage.

At night Kitty and Walter talked about them, a book face down in her lap, blue velveteen coverlet bunched over her knees. Through years of piled laundry and broken toys they laughed about them, worried,

yelled at each other when Barbara's grades slipped, when Kitty found a dime bag of pot in Suzanne's dresser drawer. Years of listening down the halls for the snotty hitch of a cold ridden child's breath, for the moan of bad dreams or stomach upset, for the muffled thud that meant Erin was out her window again, squatting in her nightgown on the bare roof, cold under the stars.

And years of Walter, thick hands laced behind his head, lidded eyes fixed speculatively on the ceiling. Walter the disciplinarian and painter of little girl's rooms. The photographer of recitals and graduations, clumsy sewer of Brownie patches and epaulets, the creased hand turning over their rocks, lifting them into trees. Walter the math tutor, the softball coach, the midnight smoker in the back garden, planted under the twining wisteria vine, looking up to their windows, silent, wreathed in the coal glow of his cigarette. Walter the father and the partner. Walter...

"Don't tell Daddy, please."

The legacy of daughters: that they turn to you, and in turning have to show their backs to someone. Erin leaned across the counter and gave her this secret, deposited it to be wrapped neatly around itself and tucked away, taut and glowing. By the time Walter got home it would be so well hidden that there would be only the faintest after-image hovering around the house, an uneasyness in the cornors at night, a weak magnetism pushing from the walls.

Erin leaned across the counter to give her this secret and with it, trailing messily behind like excess string, the ingrained call for help. The high pitched yowl of cubs lost in the woods that sends mothers racing, mouths watering in anticipation of the warm snugg of scruff, the soft, heavy drag of a young body back home. Kitty wanted to pick Erin up, to rock her, fold her back into the rounded weight of a child and press her into her belly where she could be gripped forever, warm

and free from pain. Instead, she reached out and cupped the side of Erin's face in her palm, fingers splayed into her hair, cut thumb spreading the tears in a damp swath under her eye.

"No, I won't tell your father. Some soup, Erin honey. I'll make you some soup."

The car is getting hot, but the idea of taking her coat off, bending and twisting against the sleeves while the seat belt cuts painfully into her breast, is too much. They are stopped at a light. An intersection downtown, five, ten minutes from home. Walter is humming under his breath.

A man in a black wool overcoat is standing on the corner waiting for the light to change. At his feet is a drift of snow packed into solid slush by the wheels of passing cars. He is tamping its top most ridge carefully with one polished leather shoe. There is a thin film of salt visible on the side of the shoe. He has made four square divots in the snow ridge. He is starting on the fifth.

Behind the man in the wool coat, a woman and her daughter are walking. The girl is crying, her eyes swollen and snot gleaming in half frozen streamers in the hollow above her upper lip. The woman is saying something, yanking on her arm. The girl howls, screws her eyes shut and pulls against her mother's grip. Her hat is laced tightly under her chin and has a frog on it. Full body weight against her mother's arm.

The man is shaving off a bit of excess snow from the side of divot number three. They look like the turrets on a medieval castle. He looks up briefly to see if the light has changed yet. It hasn't. He checks his watch.

"Mind if I turn on the radio?"

"No. Go ahead."

The light changes. The man in the wool coat is still tamping the top edge of one of his turrets. Their car moves forward. With her full weight

against her mother's arm, the little girl slips, feet skidding on the icy sidewalk. They are passing them. The man notices the light change and hops into the street, trying to avoid a puddle. They are almost past. The girl slides around, pivoting her helpless weight on the arm still gripped by her mother. She buffets off her mother's legs, swings in a half arc, hangs a second caught in the air and falls. The man lands on the ball of his foot and catches the last shallow drift of the puddle with the smack of his heel. He sprays a thin wave of grey water behind him. The mother swoops her daughter off the ground and onto her hip in one motion. Keeps walking. The man shakes his foot a little at the high point of its swing into the next step. Keeps walking. The car passes them.

"What station do you want, Kitty?"

"I don't know. Whichever one you want."

Kitty's shoes are hurting her feet. She braces the pointed toe of her right shoe on the heel of her left and pushes it off, scoops off the right shoe with her bared toes. She tucks her feet under her chair to keep them off the damp floor mat. There is a dead leaf clinging to the back of one of the shoes. Kitty looks at it and thinks about how the curve of the heel wraps so intimatly around the curve of her heel, how they mirror themselves. She thinks about scraping the leaf off and looks back out the window.

The cherry blossoms cling to everything in D.C. They are speared on high heeled shoes and plastered to pant cuffs, cling to the static material of stockings. Brown and leaking in their creases, they edge the streets and settle in wet drifts along the marble halls of the museums. Kitty thinks they make the city look fake, like it is made out of colored styrofoam. Walter had wanted to come.

"It'll be fun. We'll bring the girls, show them the sights. It's not that much for a plane ticket over."

The last time it had been spring too, but she doesn't remember

cherry blossoms. The hard horizontal slash of her mother's skirt against her marble calves. Dad's hands, square and snagging against her blue dress, lifting Kitty up so she can see the paintings.

"So what if they miss school. I mean, what do they learn there anyway but how to be polite to people they hate? There's plenty of time for that."

He was always too rough. His hands bunched and pulled at the tender skin of her armpits, fingers meeting across the fragile hollow of her sternum. She cried, shrieked louder against the sterile echo of the museum halls. Her mother had bought her a picture in the gift shop to shut her up. The same one Daddy had been swinging her up to see. John Singer Sargent's *Street in Venice*.

"Well, if you really think you'll be too busy. Yeah, sure. Some other time."

On her first day teaching, Kitty walked into the classroom, turned off the lights, pulled down the blinds, turned on the projector and advanced the first of her crisp new slides. She edged, hips slanted and tight in the narrow aisle between desks, to the front of the room and put her hands carefully at her sides.

"This is John Singer Sargent's *Street in Venice*," she said with her back toward the twenty-five greying faces at their desks. Her hands smoothed the wool of her skirt, plucked it into a thin ridge and then smoothed it out again. Framed by the dark slate of the blackboard the thin girl walks slowly down her alley. Her eyes are downcast and in the tilt of her head, the set of her shoulders, she is smiling.

"This is a woman walking down an alley. She is made of paint. So is the alley. Everyone is looking at her. Not just the people you can see, the two men in their hats and cloaks, with the sinister way they are leaning. Not just the old hump of a fruit vendor behind her. This is a girl walking down an alley and behind the walls, in the dark wood

rooms, people are sitting down to cabbage soup with crusty loaves of bread." Her back was still to them, but one rebellious hand crept up to her neck, the index and middle fingers paling on the wide band of her pulse. "There are people smoking cigarettes and spitting into the fire, throwing gristle to the cat. Behind the walls they have yellowed faces and missing teeth and when she walks by they stop smoking and spitting and look through their walls at her. Their conversations pause for her to walk through, this girl alone in this alley. John Singer Sargent made her out of paint. And he made everybody look at her with paint, with the white froth of her linen skirt as she kicks it in front of her and the way her fingers clasp at her waist. He made all those conversations falter, pause and start up again with pigment and a boar bristle brush." She turned, hands back down, shoulders squared, "Good morning."

Two or three of them said good morning back. The rest shuffled in their seats, grey faces floating like the dust floats in the shafts of light that slant through the blinds. On the blackboard the girl is walking down the alley, moon face bridged with light and the empty windows of the tenements behind her.

When Walter started cracking his knuckles, popping them meticulously joint by joint, Kitty knew he had given up. She pictured him leaning against the closet door behind her, hip-shot with one leg crossed at the ankle, watching her back. She balled the last of her underwear and shoved it into a corner of the suitcase. "Do you think you can give me a ride?" she asked, without turning around, "Or should I take a taxi."

Walter waited with her at her gate. When she boarded she looked over her shoulder and caught one last glance of the back of his jacket disappearing among a sea of other backs. On the plane she looked out the window and bit at the tender ridges of skin around her nails.

Philip had gotten to the hotel before her. When she walked into the room, the door unlocked and muffled on the thick carpet, he had

already unpacked and stored his empty duffle under the bed, the blue strap snaking out below the dust ruffle. There were eleven roses in a vase on the bedside table. In the corner by the television was a limp heap of clothes, khakis, blue button down shirt, white boxers and a pair of socks, brown and balled with their gold toes lapping out like tongues. The twelfth rose was on one of the pillows. Philip was in the shower.

Kitty opened the door again and slammed it, hard enough to send the knocker into a descending staccato of taps. A moment later the shower turned off and there was silence. Kitty could hear water dripping, off the faucet or off his body. "Hello? Kitty?"

She sat down on the bed, scuffing the duffle strap under it with her heel, and picked up the rose.

"Hey," he was in the door behind her. "I thought that was you. How was your flight?"

She ran her finger along the bole of the rose, pinched the waxy half leaves that clung to its base. "So when are you going to divorce your wife?"

He was quiet. Sat down heavily on the other side of the bed. She turned from the waist and looked at him over her shoulder. A thick sheaf of her own hair and his blurry face squinting at her over his shoulder.

"Well..." his voice caught and he cleared his throat.

"Oh forget it, I don't care." She turned back to face the door. Strands of her hair caught in the crease of her eyelid and she scrubbed her hand across her forehead impatiently. "I really don't."

She turned fully and smiled at him to show she meant it. He was naked to the waist, towel wrapped loosely around his hips. He looked at her and pinched the bridge of his nose. She smiled. She meant it.

* * *

"Kitty," he leaned back against the headboard and his belly paunched up over the towel. "Do you know what Elise does when I'm not at home?"

She shrugged, tucked herself under his arm and began twirling his damp chest hair around the tip of her index finger. Drawing her legs up she nudged the rose off the bed.

"She gardens. Any time of year, middle of winter. I go out of town and Elise gardens. I come back and this is what she tells me about. The garden, bedding the roses. Aphids or whatever."

Kitty kissed the creased skin right above his armpit. She trailed her hand down to his belly and let it rest there, fingers making gentle kneading motions.

"I don't know if she eats even. Her hands get all cut up. How do you leave a woman like that?"

Kitty kissed his shoulder again.

"Besides, I like her. You and me, we're pals and I love that. I love you. But Elise, Elise goes out and gardens in the snow."

She slid her hand under the towel.

"Kitty?"

* * *

It is the same gloaming kind of classroom, the same slate blackboard and the girl's quick feet, her hidden smile. There are scratches on the slide now. Dark lines that fade in and out of the alley walls.

"So, John Singer Sargent. *Street in Venice*. What's going on here? Anyone?" It was quiet. In the front row a boy whose name was either Evan or Ryan was hunched over an elaborate doodle, intertwined lines and semi-circles looping over his scanty notes. Two rows behind him a fat girl was falling asleep. Her head jerked and lolled, eyes rolling back into her sockets as she tried to focus. The room was starting to get hot. "Anyone? Alright, we have this girl walking down an alley. Why is she

there? Why did Sargent feel she was important enough to paint? Why are those two men looking —"

"Maybe she's a whore." A girl's voice, Kitty couldn't tell which one. They all sounded the same. Flat, affected consonants, nasal pauses, a bubbly rounding of the vowels. The class tittered a little. One boy mouthed the word 'whore,' and laughed loudly, shuffling his feet under his desk. Kitty sighed and dropped the text book she was holding onto the table in front of her. The muffled thwack it made woke up the fat girl who jumped and almost fell out of her seat. She looked around her with stunned bewilderment. The class roared.

"Ok, guys. Ok, come on." They got quiet slowly and Kitty sat down to wait out the last few disconnected giggles. She looked over her shoulder at the blackboard and considered the girl, the slant of her shoulders, the secret clasp of her hands.

"Right," she said, "John Singer Sargent. Moving on."

* * *

They were using the yellow sheets. Last time it had been blue. With yellow Kitty woke up happier, but the bed seemed hotter as the morning light sliced into the room. It made her sweat sometimes, stains darkening the armpits of her tee-shirt. Everything's a trade off.

"Does this mattress sag?"

"What?"

"Does the mattress sag. In the middle, I mean."

"Where? In the middle? Yeah, I guess it does sag. We should get a new one."

"This is a new one. That's why I was asking. I couldn't believe it because this is a new one. Pass me that pillowcase."

"Walter..."

"Hmm? Pull that end a little tighter will you?"

"Walter..."

"Not brand new, but new enough that it shouldn't sag already. Cheaply made I guess, probably foreign labor."

"Shit."

"What, did it slip off? What's the matter?"

"Nothing. Just shit. Shit, shit, shit."

"Are you ok? Did you hurt yourself?"

"No, nothing. Nothing's wrong."

"Well, it looks like something's wrong. What's wrong? You want to talk about it?"

"No. Jesus. I told you nothing was wrong and even if something was wrong maybe its something I can't talk to you about or I would have already. Or maybe its something I don't want to talk to you about. I don't always want to talk to you about everything."

"Alright, Christ. Forget I asked."

"No, it's just sometimes I wish you would listen to me. You never listen to me."

"Kitty, I'm trying to listen to you. You're the one who said you didn't want to talk."

"No, I said I *couldn't* talk about it, not that I didn't want to. When I said I didn't want to I only meant that *sometimes* I don't want to and you shouldn't think I do want to all the time just because you ask. Like that gives you some kind of a right."

"Ok, Kitty. I can see your not in a rational mood today so we'll just drop it, ok?"

"That is so fucking patronizing. Do you have to be so fucking patronizing all the time?"

"How is that patronizing? I'm just saying..."

"You don't know everything, you know. There are some things you have no idea about, things in your own family..."

"What don't I know about?"

"...because you are just as petty and stupid and narrow-minded as all the people that you think you're better than. And just as unreasonable, only you won't admit it."

"What don't I know about in my own family?"

"Oh nothing Walter. Forget it. You wouldn't understand."

Outside the neighbor's kids were riding their bikes down the hill and crashing them into the drainage ditch across the street. Through the half open window Kitty could hear them shouting and the clang of their bikes grating against cement. Everything's a trade off.

* * *

"That's not my name."

It had gotten dark out. Black car, black road, black trees and black sky all falling into one another. "What?" Kitty wants to roll down the window and ride her hand along the slip stream of the car. Spread her fingers wide into the wind and see if she can tell the difference between her hand and the sporadic clustering of bats in the far arc of the headlights.

"That's not my name," he repeats. She looks over at him quickly, eyes feeling grainy in their sockets. He doesn't look angry. Should he look angry? Maybe his knuckles are slightly whiter with tension, fingers snugged more firmly into the leather grooves of the steering wheel. They had been sitting silently. Kitty looking blankly out the window and listening to the music. Walter driving, thrumming his fingers on the steering wheel in time with the beat.

She had said his name, to get his attention. So she could ask him, "Walter, could you turn the heat down?" or, "Walter, could you change the station?" or "Walter..." But she hadn't said Walter.

"That's not my name," and here was the familiar swell of panic. The copper blood taste balling in her throat, sending gleaming filings onto her tongue. What had she called him? The names slipped out of her so easily now, with none of the sharp tug of recognition that would tie

them to a face. What had she called him? Barbara? Suzanne or Erin? That happened all the time, her daughter's names taking the place of Walter's, her colleagues, even proper nouns. Had she called him Lainey? Zach?, the family dog now ten years dead with the casual horror of tire marks splitting the soft white fur of his belly. That would be funny. They could laugh at that. 'Oh, Kitty. Your slipping." They could turn that into another thread in the web that connected them, "When you get to be our age..."

Had she called him Philip? Oh god unforgivable to call him Philip. She looked again at his knuckles and saw the coarse grey hairs that sprouted from the back of his fingers. His chest hair was grey now too. She saw it in the mornings, briefly before he turned away from her, almost shy, and put on his shirt. He didn't look angry, but to call him Philip, to label his stolid frame with Philip's slimness, the muscled smoothness of his back, his long fingers corkscrewing through her grey-blonde curls and his breath in her ear, "Hey, kitty cat, wake up. You have to go home."

How unfair, to both of them. Because it was Walter next to her in the car, shifting his weight on the creaking leather seats and rumbling phelgmatically deep in his throat. And it was Philip who chased beside them in the dark, who did not turn his head to look but raced solemnly, imperviously on. Philip, who no longer belonged to her or anyone, stretched along the thin line between the ground and the sky.

She was crying now, her face hot and damp with it. She could feel her wrinkles—the paper thin stretch of her skin over her cheekbones—and was furious. She stared out into the brutal night and clenched her fist in her lap, pounded it against her thigh.

"Well what then, Walter. What did I call you?"

"Hey, honey, calm down. You called me Kitty is all. Just Kitty."

Photo of a Famous Golfer's Wife

The men who manage death
are leaving. They have shuttered
their last camera flash, closed the car door.
Respectful of each other, they shake hands.
One lights a cigarette. A hat blows off
and rolls on the clay road.

She was a famous golfer's
wife. Her knees were bare
and coltish. Now they graze
each other and her shins
shine. Now her hair
mats to the leather seat.

They are walking up the clay road.
The fields and the sky are grey.
One has caught his hat and put it on.
One has picked tobacco off his tongue
and blows smoke rings at a pair of crows.

She was a famous golfer's wife
and had a back-swing of her own.
Sandals with lemon straps, white
shorts that moved as muscles
themselves at each long flex

of leg. She loved her clubs like cousins
who know all the family secrets. She walked over the fairway. She walked over the rough. She kissed them and kept walking.

SARAH BLACKMAN

Like Shadows and Like Sugar

Today it is the wrapper, plumped
and whole like the strawberry
itself. They have even drawn
the seeds. The top is green, finishing
ribbon of leaves and sun-tough stem.

Two months ago I saw a bag of limes
split and frozen on the street. Each half
paled to the sun like winter candy. Frosted
triangles sectioning the dark crescent
of rind. I want to change my name
to that color, I want to change my skin.

There is this pain in my back that twists
me. It pulls like smoke, industrial soot, curls
to my shoulders and rides me there. But I
am healthy in my sorrows. I can count
joints and taste the pink mash of marrow.

And in the basement windowsill a thousandweight
of dead flies are christening the windowsill
with their death. And in the back field God,
himself a thousandweight, is alone with the soil
and concrete. He has found my avocado
stones — lathed opals — and the scatter-shot
jewelry of my grape seeds. He has found my midden
heap of plum pits, each sunset core blessed with my spit.

Ravenous in this fallow soil, He is digging. Ravenous,
He will till and tithe. What grows will fall like shadows
and like sugar to the streets. There is never enough
to eat in this world. There is never enough
to comment on,
identify,
to throw away.

SARAH BLACKMAN

A Note from the Publisher
Hammering Away

There is no such thing as an uninteresting subject; the only thing that can exist is an uninterested person.

—C.K. Chesterton

Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.

—H.G. Wells

Reading over this fine volume before it went to print I was reminded of a governing metaphor one of my mentors, an American novelist, was fond of using. It was of the Norse god Thor making a circle around Middle earth, beating back the enemies of order. Thor got older every year, like the rest of us do, and the circle occupied by the gods and men grew ever smaller. Desperate, Woden, the god of wisdom, cornered the king of the trolls and demanded to know of him how order might triumph over chaos. The king of the trolls promised to give an answer in return for Woden's left eye, and, when he received it, gave Woden the answer: "The secret," he said, "is to watch with both eyes."

Cruel irony, to be sure, and yet the metaphor does seem to reflect a gnarly truth about our existence. There is no sure hope against the darkness that surrounds us—those things that threaten the light of culture, the order and beneficent richness of highest civilization—ignorance, narcissism, and what Chesterton himself claimed to be the worst of all sins against life, indifference. Thor, along with the other gods, has withdrawn from our immediate view, and all we have is his hammer, which represents—my novelist friend averred—not brute force

but art, or, "counting both hammerheads, art and criticism." I would add to that good scholarship of all stripes: the impulse to learn and share what is learned, to think and share what is thought, to create and share what is made. It is a forging of ideation, a smithing of art, an active and energetic engagement in civilization's learned conversation that arches toward whatever might be true, because whatever is true is relevant. Our task is to figure out how to use this hammer to these ends. It's our only hope.

Here is where the project of the liberal arts education plays its role, and in these pages we see evidence of the endeavor at its best. These poems and vignettes and essays and stories are hardy, graceful swipes at the darkness, one after the other. It is work that has been researched and written and composed by bright and engaged and curious scholars and writers and poets, interested and gifted young men and women who engage themselves in those intellectual and creative activities that are among the best of all our pursuits. We can only be pleased, and not a little proud, to know we are passing the hammer on to sure and able hands.

ROBERT MOONEY
Publisher

CONTRIBUTORS

JUSTIN ARMETTA, class of '04, wrote his article for Prof. Mark Hubley's course, Going to Extremes.

SARAH BLACKMAN Sarah Blackman will graduate in the spring of 2002 with a major in English and a minor in Creative Writing. She would like to thank, and apologize to, all of the people who appear in her stories and poems.

BENJAMIN CLAUSEN, graduated *Summa Cum Laude* in 2001 with majors in English and Hispanic studies with a minor in creative writing. He was also awarded the Emil J.C. Hildenbrand Memorial Medal for attaining the highest average in English. At his home in Darnestown, Maryland he continued work on his novel, early drafts of which he had submitted as an English senior thesis. This fall he entered the MA program in literature at American University. "I would like to thank Dr. George Shivers for all of his help, in the planning of my trip to Guadalajara, the translation of the poems I selected for my thesis in Hispanic Studies, and in the writing of the thesis itself. Without his knowledge and advice none of the work I have been able to accomplish would have been possible. I would also like to thank the Society of Junior Fellows for their generous grant which funded my trip to Guadalajara."

JILL COWPERTHWAIT of Southampton, New Jersey, graduated in 2001 in Art. She was awarded honors on her thesis "ordinary objects, extraordinary color" and received the 2001 Lynette Nielsen Art Award. Currently she is living in Chestertown and working independently on her art to prepare for graduate school.

TERESA FEWLASS of Sudlersville, Maryland, graduated *Magna Cum Laude* in 1999 with a B.A. in an individualized major of "Justice" and is continuing studies at Washington College toward a B.A. in anthropology. She has also worked as Archaeological Technician with the Department of Sociology & Anthropology.

ANGIE HALEY hopes to graduate from Washington College in 2003, with a degree in English and creative writing. After school, she plans to pursue a career in writing or publishing. For assistance and encouragement, she'd like to thank Kathy Wagner. For everything else, she feels thanks are due to the halfling, the Shredder, the midget, and especially the rhino.

CHRIS KLIMAS, an English major and computer science minor, graduated *Magna Cum Laude* in May 2001 with the Emil J.C. Hildenbrand Memorial Medal for attaining the highest average in English. From Randallstown, Maryland, he claims "he is not quite as smart as the words he writes might indicate." Don't believe it!

CARYN LAZZURI, graduated *Magna Cum Laude* in the class of 2001 as an English major with a minor in Creative Writing. She is originally from Richmond, Virginia, but hopes not to return there after graduation. She will be pursuing an MFA after a year off from academia and then hopes to go on to teach poetry at the university level.

ADA MAHONEY '01 majored in art and is a resident of Annapolis, Maryland. She is currently taking a year off to travel and plans to return to graduate school next fall to get her Master's of Fine Arts degree.

MARY MCAULIFFE, from Columbia, Maryland, plans to graduate in 2003 with a major in political science. She is currently a varsity member of the women's crew team, and was elected a Student Athlete Mentor. When she is not rowing on the Chester River, Mary dedicates her time to her fellow sisters of Zeta Tau Alpha. She is a member of the Society of Junior Fellows, and the Political Science National Honor Society, Pi Sigma Alpha. She would like to acknowledge John Taylor and Michael Harvey for their suggestions and revisions for "The Spicknall Murder Trial."

DAVID ORVIS, class of 2002, is majoring in English and is involved with the education program. He was vice president of Kappa Alpha Order and social chair of the Interfratenity Council during the 2000-2001 academic year. He is a member of the Silver Pentagon Society, Order of Omega, Society of Junior Fellows, and Omicron Delta Kappa. He wishes to thank professor Kathryn Moncrief for her guidance and support. Additionally, he wishes to thank his parents, Richard and Karen, for their unconditional love and support in all endeavors, professional and personal.

JENNIFER REEDER graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with the class of 2001 as an English and education major. She began her career with Fairfax County Public Schools in the fall, teaching high school English students the value of Thomas Hardy, Matthew Arnold, and the like, she fervently hopes. Jennifer admits to being disillusioned when she discovered that Pluto was falling from status as a planet, but she continues to hold dear her love of astronomy and her dream of someday traveling to the stars.

LAURA MAYLENE WALTER will graduate in the class of 2003 with an English major and a minor in Creative Writing. This is her second year of publication in the *Washington College Review.* She would like to dedicate her poem, "Green" to the memory of her mother, June Lois Walter.

DENNIS WILSON graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with the class of 2001. He majored in History and received the Arthur A. Knapp '39 memorial Prize in History, given to the graduating major who has displayed unusual interest, enthusiasm and ability in the field of history. He returned to Washington College this fall to obtain his secondary education certification. He would like to thank those professors on campus who have given him an awareness of obscured histories and impossible thoughts, most notably Gena Porto, who first introduced him to Michel Foucault. He would also like to thank, with gratitude, the members of Project Aware—all of whom have given him cause to say, in the words of the poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, "I have found parts of myself never dreamed of by me." Keep the torch burning, brothers!

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JUSTIN ARMETTA

SARAH BLACKMAN

BENJAMIN CLAUSEN

JILL COWPERTHWAITE

TERESA FEWLASS

ANGIE HALEY

CHRIS KLIMAS

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CARYN LAZZURI

ADA MAHONEY

MARY MCAULIFFE

DAVID ORVIS

JENNIFER REEDER

CATHERINE SHEAHAN

LAURA MAYLENE WALTER

DENNIS WILSON

WASHINGTON COLLEGE
300 Washington Avenue Chestertown, Maryland 21620